

THE LONDON READER

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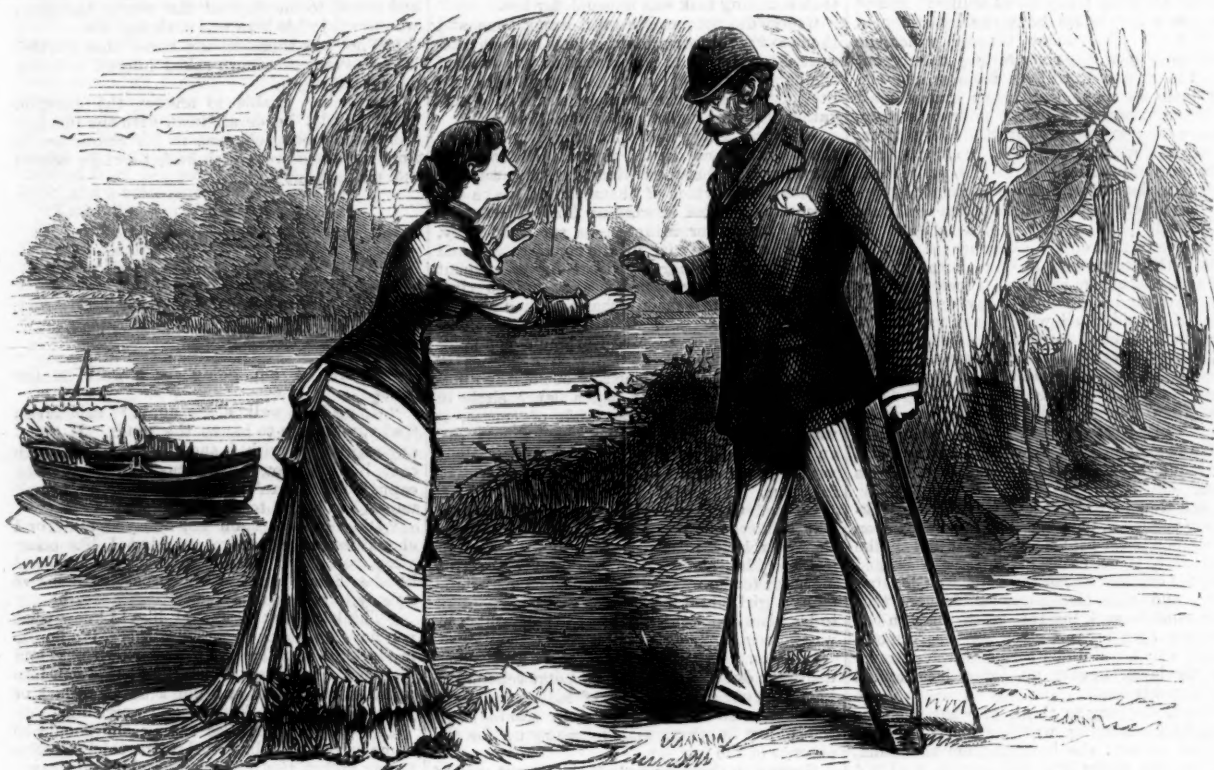
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FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 27, 1878.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[UNCLE BASIL.]

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clylie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER III.

AT THE WILLOWS.

Behold the man for generous deeds renown'd,
Who in remotest regions won his fame;
With wise munificence he scattered round
The wealth that o'er the sea from India came.

In a handsome mansion on the banks of the Thames, midway between Battersea and Richmond, a family conclave was assembled to discuss the contents of a letter which had that morning arrived from India.

The party consisted of four persons: Mrs. Garland, a lady of some two or three and forty, whose deep mourning and widow's cap told of recent bereavement; and her three children—George, Amy and Minnie.

"Then we shall not have to give up The Willows, mamma?" observed Amy, a tall, handsome girl of some nineteen or twenty.

"No, not at present, at least," replied her mother, with a sigh of relief; "it would have been a hard trial to me to give up this house, in which I have spent so many happy years, besides giving people the idea that we were poor."

"Yes, that's the worst of it," continued Amy, with a calculating hardness which grated upon the listener when coming from one so young.

"I'm very fond of the house, and the grounds and all that kind of thing," she went on, "but it is the position it gives us that makes me wish to stay here. You see, mamma, if we could keep up for a year or two, Minnie and I might get well married, George could get a rich wife, and then you would have your five hundred a year to live on without being burdened with us."

"Thank you, Amy," replied George, who was a couple of years older than his sister, and thought he had been very badly treated by his father's will; "but I have no idea of marrying a pile of money-bags tied up to some woman's apron strings; if Uncle Basil is so very rich and coming to live with us, I shall expect him to do something for me. I'm his heir at law; I'd take his name, too, if he wished it. George Garland Chartres, not a bad name is it, Minnie? Amy never thinks of anything but self."

"If that is the case, I must have caught the habit from you," retorted Amy; and George was about to retaliate when Minnie asked:

"What is Uncle Basil like, mamma, is he very much older than you?"

"Yes, dear, eight or ten years, I think; but he is only my half-brother, you know; my mother was papa's second wife, and Basil was a big boy when I was a baby. But he was always very kind to me, and it was through him that the five hundred a year I have was settled upon me at my marriage, and could not afterwards be disturbed by your papa's creditors."

"Ugh!" grunted George; "that's why I think the governor might have left what he had besides to his son, instead of tying it up as he did; what's the use of a hundred a year to a man of my tastes and habits?"

"Better reform your tastes and habits,"

sneered Amy, "instead of coveting the little your mother and sisters possess; if I were a man I'd have a little more spirit and ambition than to idle away my life as you do."

"Much you know about it!" snapped her brother, more irritated than he cared to admit; "besides, you are a very high principled young woman without a doubt, wanting to keep up appearances for a year or two so that you may sell yourself with advantage to the highest bidder. English girls seem to be neither better or worse than Circassian slaves, the only difference being that they sell themselves and pocket the purchase money."

"That isn't true of all of us, George," interrupted Minnie, "I have no desire to marry a rich husband, and Amy doesn't mean it, it's only a way she has of talking about things of the kind."

"Indeed, I do mean it," asserted Amy, "so don't think I make a pretence of being better than I am. I intend to make a good match, and Uncle Basil will be here just in time to help me; it's always an advantage to have a distinguished relative with the reputation of great wealth to dance attendance on one. I intend to be sweetly amiable to him, and do everything that will please and amuse him."

"Yes, do," sneered her brother, "it will be such a delightful change to see Amy 'sweetly amiable' to anyone; we shall hear of crab-apples being sweet and mellow soon;" and he laughed scornfully.

"I wish you two would not be always squabbling," here interposed Mrs. Garland, "it's very unbecoming in both of you; and it shows a great want of good feeling for me, as though I had not grief and trouble enough without

your adding to it. I am glad, indeed, that Basil is coming, he will save me from such wrangling scenes as these."

From which complaining observation it will be seen that Mrs. Garland was almost as silly as she had once been pretty, and that her children would have been utterly beyond control but for the power over their income which her husband and guardians had given her.

"I wonder what Uncle Basil is like?" mused Minnie, as a few hours later she sat alone in her own room; the window through which she looked being open, the river rolling calmly on, while the splendid willows from which the house took its name bent down and dipped their graceful branches to the flowing stream. "George expects to be his heir," she went on, with her half uttered thoughts. "Amy intends to fascinate him with her wit and beauty; and mamma thinks she will have a protector, someone who will enforce her orders when George or Amy are rebellious; as for me, I suppose he will not even think of my existence; I wonder how it is that some people seem born only to command, and others to obey. I belong to the latter class, and I don't like my destiny. I wonder if Uncle Basil will regard me as the others do, as something only to be useful to him. How I envy those swans upon the river; they can float on if they like until they reach the sea as I should wish to do."

And then the girl fell into a silent fit of musing, while her fair hair blew over her sweet childish face and dark hazel eyes, giving her a picturesque beauty that she did not always possess.

As she thus leaned out of the window, looking over the lawn, past the weeping willows, on to the broad river that heaved and swelled like the bosom of some living creature, she seemed to become conscious that someone was looking at her, and with that singular faculty that impels us all to seek for the cause through the effect, her eyes became fixed on the face of a stranger who stood under a tree at the extreme end of the lawn, having no doubt just landed there from his boat.

Without stopping to think of what she was doing, or considering whether she might be mistaken or not, she hurried from the room, ran down the stairs into the garden, and not pausing to take breath, ran up to the stranger, exclaiming:

"Uncle Basil!"

"Yes; how did you know me, child?" asked the gentleman, tenderly, smoothing back her tumbled hair and gently kissing her cheeks.

"I—I don't know. I felt it was you," was the reply. "Mamma is in the drawing-room, won't you come and see her."

"Yes, I had forgotten; you are like she was when a child, my little niece; if you had only been my daughter!"

And then he sighed heavily, as though he were vaguely mourning for some treasure, the very existence of which he was doubtful about.

"They will all be delighted to see you, uncle?" continued Minnie, holding her newly arrived relative by the hand and leading him towards the house. "Mamma only got your letter this morning, and we did not expect you till the next mail."

By this time they had reached the room in which Mrs. Garland was seated reading a novel, and Amy was listlessly engaged upon some elaborate fancy work.

The stranger's bronze-hued face carried recognition with it, and the widow in a moment was in his arms almost hysterically sobbing.

"Basil, my brother, I have someone to take care of me at last!"

"Poor little Lily," said the new comer, placing the plump widow on a couch. "I was so grieved to hear of your husband's death; but who is this. My other niece, I think," and he turned to Amy who had been standing by, somewhat impatient at the undivided attention that her mother had exacted.

"Just like mamma," she was mentally observing, "no care for anyone but herself; any

other mother would have thought of introducing her children. I wonder how Minnie managed to get hold of him?"

But she uttered none of these thoughts aloud, on the contrary, she smiled her sweetest smile, presented her fair cheek for her uncle to kiss, and was the first to ask if he would like a glass of wine or any refreshment before dinner time; she even offered to go and see that his room was got ready for him, and went, though such a trifling task was unusual for her.

George did not come in until dinner time, and then, to use his own expression, he was disgusted to see how the women had got hold of the nabob; so much so, that he paid but very little attention to the scarcely startling observations that his nephew addressed to him.

Of course the young man could not resent the unintentional slight, indeed, it seemed a case of rivalry between himself, Amy, and his mother, as to which of them should make the most rapid strides in winning Colonel Chartres' attention; as for Minnie, she sat quietly by, taking but little part in the conversation, and neither her brother or sister for a moment thought of looking upon her as a possible rival in the plans and schemes that they had already indulged in.

In consequence of Mr. Garland's comparatively recent death, anything like parties or gaiety of the kind was entirely out of the question, but the Garlands had a large circle of friends and acquaintances, and, of course, it was but natural that many of them should call on the chance of meeting the uncle whose wealth had already been reported to be fabulous.

Colonel Chartres, however, had not been at The Willows more than a week before his affectionate relatives were exercised in their minds lest the idea should occur to him of getting married, for he was still a handsome man, and many a girl might have loved and been content to be his wife without the wealth of which he was possessed.

So Mrs. Garland and her son and eldest daughter dived at all kinds of petty schemes to keep him out of the society of ladies, and gave themselves no end of unnecessary trouble with that object in view, and to make up for the absence of the fair sex.

George Garland invited all the decent men of his acquaintance to come to The Willows, so the place might seem cheerful, and his uncle might be amused.

Among George Garland's friends, whose presence at The Willows was rare enough to be considered a favour, was a certain Percy Rossburn, a barrister, who, though young, was working his way earnestly and steadily to a good position at the bar.

Mr. Rossburn was good looking, clever and industrious, and Mrs. Garland had often audibly sighed and expressed the wish that her son would follow his example and be more like his friend.

Thus it happened that one afternoon, Mr. Rossburn having pulled his boat up to The Willows and given its inmates a call, was persuaded, not without difficulty, to dine and spend the night there, returning to town the next morning.

Colonel Chartres was out when the young barrister arrived, and they met for the first time at the dinner table.

The colonel had not heard or noticed the visitor's name in the brief introduction, and the fish was being removed, when George Garland, speaking across the table, said:

"Rossburn, pass the sherry, will you?"

A crash followed. Everyone started, and all eyes were turned upon the colonel, who, ashy as death, seemed petrified for the moment, the glass of wine he was raising to his lips having fallen from his hand, while he seemed mechanically to be trying to repeat the name, "Rossburn."

Becoming conscious at last of the surprise and alarm of those around him, Colonel Chartres with an effort tried to regain his self-possession and self-control, adding by way of apology:

"I am sorry, but don't take any notice of me; I am not often taken like this."

"Can we get anything—shall I send for a doctor?" asked Mrs. Garland, anxiously.

But her brother replied almost with irritation:

"No, I am quite well now; go on with your dinner, and don't mind me," and he made a pretence of eating as usual, but every now and then his eyes wandered, with mingled curiosity and dread, to the face of the young barrister, who again in his turn was studying him.

"What was there in my name that startled him?" Percy Rossburn asked himself a dozen times that night.

And being unable to answer the question satisfactorily, he determined, with the tenacity that was a strong element in his character, to hunt out the secret which he felt certain existed and make it his own.

CHAPTER IV.

ONLY TO DIE!

He waits with hellish rancour imminent
To intercept thy way, or send thee back
Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.

MILTON.

"AUNTIE, I am going for a walk on the sands."

"Going for a walk alone again?" said Meg; "why, you seem to haunt the sands. If you'd anybody to go with I shouldn't think so much of it, but how you can go moping about alone capps me. I can't abide going alone myself unless I'm bound to be somewhere."

"It's very well I am not like you, aunt, or I should scarcely ever go out; but I like being alone, you know. I can take a book with me, and besides, I can think so much better when I've nobody to talk to me."

"Think! Think! I should like to know what you have to think about; but there, it's no use my talking, you always have your own way, and you always will, only mind it don't lead you into mischief or danger, and don't be after dark or your uncle will get fretting and worrying."

The girl laughed, and saying she should be home by tea-time, buttoned up her thick, closely-fitting jacket, tied on her hat, and took in hand, set out for her afternoon stroll.

Despite the invariable habit she had of grumbling at her, Meg Topsam looked after the girl with a curious mixture of pride and affection which she was too peculiar if not too proud to openly express.

"She's growing a bonnie lass," she said, with evident pride, "and she's a good lass too, though she's awful spoilt and got odd notions in her head. She's clever at book learning, no doubt, but what's the use of book learning to a woman? better she'd learn to scrub, and darn, and cook, but she won't, so it's no use talking to her, or to cousin Chris either for that matter. I only hope her pretty face and fine notions won't bring her any harm, that's what I do; not that she'd ever do harm if she knewed it, that I'd lay my life to, but it's a temptation for a woman to go and learn more than them she's brought up with, and it's a thing as I don't hold with now."

With which reflection Miss Topsam went about her household work, for she at least was never idle, and more than that, let everyone else know it.

Meanwhile the subject of her meditation had made her way down to the beach, and was walking away from the town, occasionally meeting boys looking for bait or hunting among the low green rocks for winkles or other crustaceans, the tide being far out.

Sometimes these stragglers favoured her with a glance, but most of them knew her, and if they gave her a thought it was to observe what a fine young woman old Growler's niece was growing.

In this they were right, the last two years had made a wonderful change in Katie Jessop; singular and unlike other girls she would always be, but whatever might be thought of her talent,

or the manner in which she spent her life, there could be no doubt of the fact that she was becoming really beautiful.

Half the charm lay in her total unconsciousness of loveliness, and if anyone had suggested that her beauty would help her where the talent she believed she possessed could not, she would have received the suggestion with both surprise and anger, believing, not unreasonably, that some covert sneer was contained in it.

She must have walked some three or four miles, and was getting slightly weary, for the sand was particularly fatiguing, and at length she sat down on a piece of rock, opened her book, and after gazing out at sea dreamily for some time, she began to read.

How long she remained like this she could not tell, for the winter's sun was setting red and angry looking into the sea, when she was startled from her study by a shadow upon her book, and a voice saying:

"Katie, I'm come to speak with you."

Something in the tone of the voice rather than the words sent a pang almost of terror to the girl's heart, her cheek paled, while a half frightened expression came into her eyes, as she looked up, to encounter the burning gaze of George Crabtree.

"Speak to me," she repeated, mechanically; "you can do that at home, can't you, without coming all this way to interrupt me?"

"No, you know I can't," he replied, doggedly, seating himself down on the rock by her side.

The girl did not answer him, though a hot flush mounted to her cheek, and her heart beat as though it would choke her with its rapid pulsation.

She looked at the long low stretches of sand to the right and left, on which not a human being besides the one at her side was visible, at the wide expanse of sea with its foam-crested waves, now making their way towards her, for the tide was coming in, and though there were boats and ships in sight, they were too far off to hear, her cries if she shrieked ever so loudly, or to render her assistance, even if they were conscious of her distress.

As she thus thought, the young man at her side put his arm round her waist, and bent over her until his hot breath fanned her cheek, saying:

"Give us a kiss, Katie."

Her first impulse was to spring from him, to express her indignation violently, and let him see how frightened she was, but she restrained herself with an effort, and trying to loosen the grasp on her waist, said, with cold disdain:

"I shouldn't kiss you, if I liked you better than I do, when you forget yourself and me like this."

"Oh, you mean because old Growler, your uncle, is my master," said the young man; "but that won't last long, you know, and I shall get a share in a smack for myself, and then I'll marry you, but we'll be sweethearts until then, won't we?"

"No, I'm too young to think of such a thing, and I am very angry with you for taking hold of me like this, but let me go, and I'll forgive you."

"I'll not forgive myself if I do," was the reply. "I came out after you, followed your footsteps on the sands to have you to myself for a bit, and if I swing for it I'll have sommat for my trouble. If it was that softsoapy Rossburn you wouldn't make such a kick up, I know."

"How dare you say so! I don't care for Basil any more than I do for you, but he would never behave like this. Let me go this instant."

And anger was getting the mastery of terror in her breast at the indignity inflicted on her.

Crabtree's grasp, instead of being relaxed, was tightened about her waist, and though she fought and struggled, and screamed for help, he forced his loathsome kisses upon her cheeks.

Her struggles too made matters worse; they roused a very demon in the man's heart.

He should be punished for this; there was no going back, he argued, with the girl living to

tell the tale, and the tempter whispered that he should give the rein to his wild passions, then kill his victim and leave her body for the incoming tide to float and carry away.

The thought was a terrible one; he had no intention of anything of the kind as he tracked the girl's footsteps on the sands.

He had only thought of being before Rossburn in winning his master's niece, of taking by persuasion rather than violence a few kisses from the sweet lips he had so often longed to press, and now his passion had overmastered him, he had lost all self-control, all thought of anything but the wild impulse of the moment, and he gave himself up to it with the unreasoning ferocity of a furious animal.

Poor Katie, she was strong for her size and age, and she fought and struggled madly to be free; her sole insane idea being to get away from this dreadful monster, and rush into the sea.

Death! it had no terrors for her; it was all she hoped for; she had begged, prayed, and threatened by turns, but all in vain.

Her dress was torn, her head was reeling! Surely she was going mad! Oh, if she were but going to die, is the one thought that is uppermost in her mind, and the madness of terror and despair give her a fictitious strength.

But the end is almost near, her struggles are almost over, when a voice, familiar to both, sounds close to them, and a well-planted blow on Crabtree's head makes him relax his hold on the terrified girl.

Still haunted by her mad fear, however, Katie does not stop to speak to her preserver, but rushes off, with the craving for death, to meet the advancing tide.

Her feet are in the water; the wide expanse of sea is before her. She has craved for death—there it is at her command; but now she stands and hesitates, and looks back, as though taking a farewell glance at what she leaves behind.

What she does see drives the idea of suicide from her mind, for there stand Basil Rossburn and George Crabtree, evidently engaged in an unequal contest, for George is two years older than his opponent, and bigger and stronger in proportion.

The feeling of gratitude and protection is greater than fear in the girl's mind, greater even than the humiliation which she has yet scarcely had time to realize, that must succeed the idea of being the subject of such an outrage, and she turns away from the surging waters, and runs back to where the two youths are standing in an attitude of defiance, almost as rapidly as she had dashed from them.

"Basil, don't fight with him, he isn't worth it," she entreated; "he is a bad, wicked creature. Let us make haste home, they will wonder what has become of us."

"Miss Meg sent me to find you," said Basil, ceasing to spar at his enemy, "and it was well that I came. Are you very much hurt, Katie?"

"I don't know; I have been dreadfully frightened. I was going to throw myself in the sea; but come, we had better go home, that wicked fellow won't dare to touch me again, and my uncle will soon teach him how to behave himself."

Crabtree's courage had ebbed out on Katie's return.

Had she really thrown herself into the sea and been drowned, he might have tried to silence his fellow apprentice for ever.

But to contend against the two was hopeless, and he now deliberately picked up his cap, and without a word of adieu, defiance or excuse for his conduct, he walked away in the opposite direction to the one they would have to take in returning to the town.

Basil picked up Katie's book, which had been thrown down and trodden upon in the struggle, suggested she should tie on her hat, and arrange her torn and disordered dress as well as possible, and then said they had better walk back by the road, as they would be able to get over the distance in nearly half the time it would take by the sands, and he knew Miss Topsam would be

very anxious about her niece, who ought to have been home before then.

Katie complied, and the two walked back on the path at the top of the low cliffs for some time in silence.

At length the girl, taking her companion's hand, said:

"Basil, I haven't thanked you; you have done more than save my life to-day, and I shall never forget it."

The youth made no reply, except to press the hand which clasped his to his lips and gently kiss it.

"I know you don't want me to thank you, Basil," continued the girl, "but I do from my very heart, and I want you to promise me something."

"What is it, Katie?" and he lingered over her name as though the very sound of it were music to him.

"I want you to promise me not to say a word about this to anyone."

"I can't do that, George must be punished; he may try it—may act like this again."

"No, he won't; he will be afraid; besides, I will take care that he doesn't stay in the house when he is on shore. You must promise me, Basil; it won't do any good making a row, and I should be so ashamed if people got to hear of it, that I should go away and never be able to look at anybody who knew me again."

"I don't see why you should be ashamed or go away; it's just what might have happened to anybody, and you couldn't help it."

"You talk like that because you're not a girl or a woman," urged Katie; "it will be dreadful to myself, ever to remember this day, and for others to know of it would almost kill me; do promise me, Basil."

And again she took his hand.

The lad clasped it, as he said:

"I will promise, Katie, on one condition."

"What is it?" she asked, nervously.

She had not forgotten Crabtree's observation about Basil, and she was afraid the stipulation would be a hard one.

She need not have dreaded it, however, for Basil's love for her, boy as he might be, was as unlike that which had urged Crabtree to violence as light from darkness, and his words reassured her as he said:

"If I say nothing about George, you must promise me never to go out for long walks like this again alone."

"Yes, I will promise that; and you will keep my secret?"

"Yes, faithfully," and he did so.

Meg Topsam scolded, though she suspected nothing wrong; Captain Growler was out, and George Crabtree did not return to the cottage for that or many subsequent nights.

The smack went off traveling without him, and when at length he did come back to the town, his master had him up before the magistrate as a runaway apprentice, and he was sent to prison for punishment.

(To be Continued.)

FLIGHT OF STORKS.

In their preparations for migration, storks are very interesting. They are never heard to utter any sound until the time of the departure has arrived. They then begin to make a very singular kind of clatter, communicating with every member of their flock. They never start until each individual is collected together. Night is the time chosen. Strict silence is then preserved, and they rise immediately high up in the air, forming themselves into a triangle, and one bird takes the apex. The duties of this position are too laborious to be long sustained, and therefore, when fatigue is felt, the leading bird retires and another takes its place. We could not manage better ourselves.

THE will and codicil of the late Mr. Banting has been proved under £70,000.

HER FUTURE MOTHER-IN-LAW.

You may do as you like, Henry. I don't pretend to dictate. No; I know my power over you ceased when you became one-and-twenty; but—the idea—Maria Brown! Why, of all girls, should you pick out Maria Brown? a flirty, dressy, foolish creature, with nothing to recommend her but her pretty face? Ah! she'll make ducks and drakes of your money. You'll become bankrupt in a year. But don't say your mother didn't warn you—don't say that.

Now, if I could have chosen your wife, I should have thought of Anna Grey; such a steady girl; so economical; makes all her own dresses; turns 'em; dyes 'em; hasn't bought a new summer hat for five years; bleaches her old one and makes it over. Ah, dear! and to see Maria Brown in that pyramid of flowers she calls a bonnet.

Well, I shall take my money and go away and live in some miserable place, all by myself; and I'll pray for you, but I can't visit you, to see that foolish, flirty Maria Brown new-furnishing the parlour, and wasting sugar, and having careless girls to steal and pick; and those beautiful linen sheets will be gone in a year, and all the table cloths and napkins. Ah! Anna Grey would have darned them to the last.

And I know how she'll use me! I know her saucy ways and the sort o' things she'll say about me! One of those girls brought up at boarding-school to think young people rule the world. Now, Anna Grey respects age. Ah, if it had been Anna! But if a girl isn't pretty men don't so much as recognise her fine qualities.

What! Eh! I've made a mistake! It's Anna Grey you are going to marry! Anna Grey!—you?

Why, she's a good girl, of course, but—my goodness, Henry! such a dowdy, and so mean—almost a miser; saves her money and wears her old clothes until they have no colour; and no accomplishments; can read and write and cipher; that's just all. Maria Brown can play the piano beautifully. I've often thought how I should like a little music. Now your sister Sarah is married, the piano is always shut.

Dear, dear! Now Anna is very worthy, but so dull. And really, she's very plain; and such a flat way of fixing her hair—no idea of taste. I declare, I thought you'd choose a beauty. And she'll expect to have the keys and lock up things. Bridget will leave; nobody could put up with her meanness. And it's so disgusting in a young woman. And that way she has of saying, "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," like an inferior, I do detest. Since you've chosen her, Henry, I'll pack my trunk and go away. I'll go to alms-house, if necessary. Yes—I will.

Oh, Henry! if you must marry, why didn't you choose somebody who would do credit to your taste? But no. I always knew, whenever you did marry, it would be the very person I detested most. That's my fate. M. K. D.

THE STEPPES OF CENTRAL ASIA.

THE steppes are the bottoms of ancient seas which once rolled over a large portion of the continent of Asia, and which, when swept by storms, rise in tumultuous waves, not of water, but sand, the particles of which may be likened to spray but that they burn like sparks of fire. The terror inspired by these storms is such as to deter even the most adventurous merchant from traversing the steppes in summer, unless under the most pressing necessity. Their aspect, when covered with snow, is described as strangely awful when oppressive, exhibiting the expanse of the ocean without its animation, and the solitude of the arctic regions without their sublimity.

Woe to the traveller who is overtaken by a storm in the steppes; his doom is inevitable, and bodies of troops which have essayed the perilous task of marching across the steppes in winter have been overwhelmed by a tempest of

snow. Dreary as are the steppes in winter, their aspect in spring is not without a certain beauty. The vegetation is rapid, and they are clothed with short vivid green grass, interspersed with scarlet poppies, wild tulips, purple larkspurs, geraniums, and many kinds of cruciferous and leguminous plants.

A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF THE SUN.

PROFESSOR RUDOLPH, in a lengthy paper on the sun, says: "It is a molten or white hot mass, equalling in bulk 1,260,000 worlds like our own, having a surrounding ocean of gas on fire, 50,000 miles deep, tongues of flame darting upward more than 50,000 miles, volcanic forces that hurl into the solar atmosphere luminous matter to the height of 160,000 miles, drawing to itself all the worlds belonging to one family of planets, and holding them all in their proper places; attracting with such superior force the millions of solid stray masses that are wandering in the fathomless abysses that they rush helplessly towards him, and fall into his fiery embrace. And thus he continues his sublime and restless march through his mighty orbit, having a period of more than 18,000,000 years."

WHAT IS LOVE?

WHAT is Love? Oh, Love's a pleasure,
Born of youth and bred of leisure,
Like a day of April weather,
Storm and sunshine, both together.

What is Love? Oh, Love's a pain,
Cruel looks and cold disdain,
Just as oil upon the fire,
Make it only burn the higher.

Flower-like in the hearts its dwells,
Bruise it, and it sweeter smells;
Nothing having most bestows,
And by giving richer grows.

Child of whims and longings strange,
Change it hates, yet lives on change!
Like a bird 'tis killed with kindness;
Ladies, 'tis a sort of blindness;
When most a fact, then most a fiction.

Like yourselves, a contradiction. R. C.

PRESERVING TREES

THOSE who may be anxious to preserve old and decaying trees may be glad to try the following method, which is recommended by the "Gardeners' Chronicle," in preference to plugging them with concrete:

"However much care may be bestowed upon it, it is impossible to make cement adhere to a living tree, and before long the water, percolating along the bark, will find its way slowly but effectually into the hole and pursue its work. The only effective way of curing such a disease is to make a plug of oak or rather hard wood, smear it with tar, and hammer it tight in the hole until its outer service is on the same level as the bole. If there is any recuperative power left in the tree the bark will soon grow over the plug, and the wound be perfectly healed, which will never happen with the concrete process.

It is said that the Board of Works intends to plug with concrete the wounds of the old trees in Hyde Park.

PROJECTILES.

THERE is now on view in the Tea-room of the House of Commons the fragment of a 250lb. projectile, which was fired with a charge of 50lb. of

gunpowder at a range of 30 yards against an armour-plate nine inches in thickness, manufactured by Sir Joseph Whitworth out of what is termed "fluid pressed steel." The fragment (8lb. in weight) shows in a remarkable manner the effect of great momentum suddenly arrested. The indenture made in the armour-plate was but one inch and a quarter in thickness, but the projectile would have penetrated an ordinary iron armour-plate 12in. in thickness.

POSTAL REGULATIONS.

THE arrangements of the Post Office are in some respects inimical to private enterprise. A short time since a person residing some distance from Dantzic, having been requested by the proprietor of a menagerie in that town to forward two hares to his address, found himself confronted by a postal regulation forbidding the transmission of live animals by post. It then occurred to him to chloroform the hares, carefully calculating the dose, in order that they might remain in an insensible condition till delivered.

But the train was late; the parcels were verified, and laid aside in the sorting-room to be sent out next morning. Accordingly, a sorter entered the room at dawn, went through the letters and parcels, and missed "108, 109, two hares." He looked for them high and low, but in vain. Their disappearance seemed inexplicable; the lock of the window was intact, the window barred, and the whole staff unanimously declared that the parcel of game was there the night before.

As the bewildered sorter again looked round the apartment, one of the hares shot by him, followed by the other, on the back of which the post-office stamp at D— was plainly visible; both darted at the open door. This was too much for the nerves of the sorter, who almost fell to the ground in astonishment; and the thought of the two spectral hares would have long embittered his lonely hours had not the proprietor of the menagerie called to inquire after the expected consignment, and explained the circumstances.

It is needless to add that "108" and his companion were never afterwards seen.

THERE are many seasons of self-denial in a man's life, and the more exalted and responsible his station, the more frequently do these seasons recur, when the voice of duty and the dictates of feeling are opposed to each other, and it is only the wicked who yield that obedience to the selfish impulses of the heart, which is due to reason and honour.

THINK not that you are the only one who endures, and who dreads the hardships of life. Ease and comfort are natural desires of the human heart, and there are thorns, real or imaginary, in every one's pathway. But sitting down and brooding will never bring power to overcome them. Rather "be up and doing," thankful for the blessings still remaining.

ZEBRAS FOR AFRICA.—The manager of the Jardin d'Acclimatation at Paris has directed the attention of African explorers to the zebra, as a beast of burden better suited to the climate than any of our domesticated animals, not even excepting the ass. Several zebras now under his charge have been successfully broken in, and M. de Semellé, who intends crossing Africa from the mouth of the Niger to the east coast, may possibly make use of this novel beast of burden.

AUSTRALIAN SOVEREIGNS.—In the year 1877 the Sydney Mint coined 1,500,000 sovereigns, and the Melbourne Mint 1,487,000 sovereigns and 80,000 half-sovereigns. Since the opening of these two branches of the Royal Mint, in 1855 and 1872 respectively, there have been coined in them 47,620,500 sovereigns and 4,172,000 half-sovereigns. The Deputy Master of the Mint states in his report this year that the uniform accuracy of these coins, both as to weight and fineness, continues to be well maintained.



[AN IMPUDENT INTREUSION.]

THE WHISPERS OF NORMAN CHASE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

And, bending back her head, looked up
And gazed upon her face. GENEVIEVE.

The best laid plans of "mice and men," we all know, are liable to fall through; but the failure is none the less exasperating on that account.

Mr. Anthony Maxwell had carried off the wrong person from the boarding-house at Bath.

But then Stanley Hope, also, had been sent upon a false track in search of Augusta Fairleigh.

And Mr. Gilbert Green, in the attempt to serve Augusta Fairleigh, had lost his own daughter.

When this last personage awoke from his stupor he alarmed the house. Bells rang and candles glimmered in all directions.

Gilbert Green told his story, but had to tell it over again before making himself intelligible.

Mr. Anthony Maxwell was gone.

The young lady in number sixty-seven was gone also. It was clear that they had gone together.

"I shouldn't have thought him the sort of gentleman that so sweet a young lady would take a fancy to," ventured the landlady.

"Confound you, she never saw him before!" he shouted. "She is my child; he was hoping to trap somebody else, and I thought, with my daughter's help, to trap himself instead."

His fury, however, wore itself out very soon.

"They won't harm my Caroline," he thought,

"she's not the sort of game they're hunting. They don't buy poison and get special licences for a little innocent like her, though"—a second thought re-awakening his alarm—"they might make away with her to conceal their own guilt. But where is the other? And to think I tricked him so far, to be done after all. Yet, I don't think he suspected—only wanted me out of the way."

He reflected a little.

"I will go in search of my child," said the excellent, though not very far-sighted man, to himself.

Lawyer—or lawyer-clerk like, his first thought was of the police.

Now, the police are rarely pictured as they really are—ordinary men, whose wits have been sharpened, on one of the many edges composed of the human mind, by a peculiar experience.

They are generally credited with either a conceited stupidity, or a preternatural sagacity.

The police of Bath, at that period—who wore heavy-caped coats instead of modern tunics, and broad-brimmed hats instead of helmets, belonged to neither category. They possessed intelligence and knew something of their neighbourhood, in and out of town.

"If so be, sir," said the chief, "that you think there has been foul play with your daughter, there is a 'trap-house' about two miles from here, where she may have been taken."

"A 'trap-house,' what does that mean?"

"It's half a ruin, and many ugly things are supposed to have been done there. I'd either blow it up, or have it watched, night and day. But they"—jerked his thumb upwards—"think I'm an idiot—so let them."

"But what shall I do?"

"We will lend you a couple of men, with a search warrant. I may be wrong; but it is there, I think, that your investigation ought to commence."

It is not necessary to follow close upon the researches of Mr. Gilbert Green.

The half-ruined house was found, and every habitable part of it explored.

There was not a single inmate, or sign of occupancy whatever, except that a half-spread supper-tray stood on a table in a lower room, proving that, if the place were haunted, it must be by spectres with appetites of their own.

Intensely alarmed now—the white-headed man, who retained his disguise, returned to the boarding-house, consulting the officers by the way on the best means of raising a cry throughout the county after his lost daughter.

There was a great heiress missing, and he felt interested in her, though knowing she was not to be traced in this direction; but what was she to him in comparison with this, his only child?

Arrived at Clifton House, he spoke to no one; but went sadly up the stairs.

"It was a shame to drag the poor child into it at all," he remorsefully thought, mechanically opening his door.

In an instant, the arms of the "poor child," soft and caressing, were round her father's neck, and his white wig was thrown upon the floor.

"Don't wear that any more, papa dear," said his half-crying, half-laughing daughter, "let us go home."

"But suppose I had not come?"

"Oh, you were sure to come."

"And suppose I had not found you here?"

"You would have guessed, of course, that I had gone to London by the stage-coach, which we had better both do, now."

Gilbert Green would gladly have taken the hint, but he had pledged himself, in a manner, to aid, at least ostensibly, in the quest of Augusta Fairleigh, and his conscience forbade him to give up the task—the more so that he had now still stronger proofs of the villainy by which she was pursued.

His employer, he knew, if other means failed, would poison her, and those were days when poisoning was a more frequent crime than even in ours, when two-thirds of the crimes perpetrated go unpunished.

No, he could not abandon his trust. But, so long as possible, he would keep his child in sight.

"Caroline," he said, "I cannot go home yet. That young girl is in fearful danger. That villain who carried you off, instead of her, will have her life if it be necessary to his plans. I must keep decoying him on, into his own trap. But how did you escape him?"

"I appealed to the woman, and she said—the insolent creature—that young ladies were never run away with against their will. I then passed them both, turning my face from the one to the other with as fierce a look as I could, papa, went out at the gate, and saw some people picnicking in the wood.

Gilbert Green kissed his child, as if proudly, saying:

"Well?"

"The man had darted after me, but when he saw them he stopped, and I heard the woman cry out:

"Don't waste time on her! The husky—insolent creature—doesn't know you."

"Did you know him?"

"Not at all, papa."

"But I do. After he has given an account of his behaviour to some friends of mine he shall give an account to me for his treatment of you. And what next? What did the picnicking people do?"

"They gave me some dinner, listened to what I had to tell, and saw me fairly on my way here."

Mr. Gilbert Green was very grateful to have his child safely with him again; but felt entirely at a loss as to his next proceedings.

It was a relief to meet Mr. Stanley Hope in the entrance hall of Clifton House, and to hear the words:

"Miss Fairleigh, sir? She's here. Went off with an old gentleman, but was brought back."

"Whom are you seeking, sir?" asked Gilbert Green, in some wonder.

"Perhaps you overheard, sir. Perhaps you can produce her?"

"Would to Heaven I could."

"But this lady assures me she is here."

"Caroline, my dear," cried the distracted man, "come down. Are you Miss Augusta Fairleigh?"

A few words of explanation were exchanged, and the disguised man, with Stanley Hope and the intrepid little Caroline, resolved themselves into a confidential council, to determine upon further steps to be taken, now that two of them had been baffled, and the third exposed to more danger than she knew of.

"Mr. Green," said Stanley, "I have an interest in this matter, beyond all that I can express."

"Mr. Hope," answered Gilbert, "am I to trust you?"

"You may."

"Then you ought not me; for I am the worst impostor that ever lived. Miss Fairleigh is not here, was never expected to be here, might, could, would, should not have been here, and I laid the false trail, which you have followed, I and my wife that is, for you may be sure if anything's false a woman has had a hand in it."

Mr. Gilbert Green prided himself upon being cynical, which he was not, in the slightest degree.

"Mr. Hope," he went on, after a moment of silence, "Miss Fairleigh's life was threatened. Don't interrupt me—I am under a vow not to tell you where. You are interested in her?"

"More than in my life. But what is now to be done?"

"First, get a warrant for the arrest of this Maxwell, on charges of attempted poisoning, abduction, forgery—an awful catalogue, you'll say, and he was my master. So it is. The rope's ten times twisted round his neck."

They once more consulted the police, and once more were granted their assistance.

As they stepped, after a rapid journey, upon the quay at Bristol, then the great port of departure for India and America, a three-decked

Indiaman dipped her colours to a passing man-of-war, whose white sails belled to the breeze as she gracefully rounded towards her anchorage.

"He is on board, rely upon it," cried Gilbert Green, with fury.

The fact was ascertained, in a dubious manner, upon inquiry; but, by that time, the gallant vessel, with all her brown pinions spread, was past signalling distance, and those were not the days in which a steam-tug could have been sent foaming and clattering after her. Gaily her royals glittered in the sun, and soon she went down upon the slope of the incessant wave.

"I have a presentiment," said Gilbert Green, "that we have not come here for nothing. Let us ask who are on board that King's ship."

The King's ship had now swung upon her bower anchor, against the current, and her two passengers had come on shore. One was a lady—the other a "barbarous and turbaned Asiatic," as it seemed. Only a single and simple question was necessary.

"Gilbert Green," said Stanley Hope, "you need not violate your vow. Neither will I mine. Where Lady Hedley goes, I shall find Augusta Fairleigh. So, accompany me or not, as you please."

"What has Lady Hedley to do with Augusta Fairleigh?"

"More than she knows herself. See; she is going to post. We will post after her."

It was so. The lonely woman had returned from her long and forlorn exile to face her one enemy upon the earth, and to rescue her only child from his hateful grasp.

The tiresome travelling of that time took her slowly to the home she had never seen, and the child whom she had never kissed since it slept in infancy upon her breast.

With what doubts and fears—hopes and yearnings—this mother, doubly blighted in her life and love—saw, for the first time, above a waving mass of green, the towers of Norman Chase.

"Augusta is not there," said Stanley Hope, as the pursuing chariot kept steadily, at a quarter of a mile's distance from that which contained the lady of Norman Chase.

"Never mind; the two are inseparable," ironically answered Mr. Gilbert Green, and not another word would he say.

Lady Hedley's return was expected, with wonder and curiosity, far and wide. But by whom with such an intensity of eagerness as by Evelyn, whose first faintest memory, almost, was that of a beautiful face, looking down on hers with a happy smile, and large, solemn eyes bending over her in all the bliss of youth.

At the first sound of wheels she was at the door—out of it—stopping the postilions—in the carriage—and clasped in the lady's arms.

Only during an instant. For, the lady, first flushing, and then turning very pale, held her back for a moment, looked at her with an intensity unspeakable, and then said:

"You are not my daughter. Who are you?"

This, unhappily, was a question which poor Evelyn, least of all people in the world, could answer.

Where was she now? Inch by inch, the entire groundwork of her life was being removed from beneath her feet.

She gazed into the proud and lovely face of the woman who had first embraced and then repelled her.

It was, beyond all doubt, that of the two portraits. There was a long, deep silence, and which they entered the mansion.

The lady, as if mechanically, followed the young girl into her room. Evelyn took one of Lady Norman's hands into her own.

"Herbert Leasholme did that," said Lady Norman, "when I last saw him. He told me I should find a daughter here."

This was not unkindly but mournfully said.

"And so you are not my mother?" Evelyn cried, passionately casting herself into Lady Norman's arms. "It breaks my last hope in life."

"Not your last; Herbert Leasholme loves you as a girl so gentle and noble should be loved."

And I, too, feel that I shall love you, though, dear Evelyn, I came across half the world to seek my own child, who is wickedly kept away from me. Will you help me?"

"I have no right to remain here," said Evelyn.

"None whatever; nor you either, madame," said Mr. Mathew Drake, who had been playing eaves-dropper at the door. Evelyn," he continued, with a familiarity that galled the young girl to the very soul, "I have news for you. Mr. Leasholme was on the point of having your father hanged, when an accident prevented him."

Evelyn simply said:

"Let me, dear lady, be mistress for one instant more in this house;" and she rang the bell.

"Thomas, turn that man out at the back-door, and if he makes his appearance again, send to Barchinbury for the police."

CHAPTER XXX.

And do not interrupt me in my course
While I descend into this bed of death.
ROMEO & JULIET.

The man who had spoken to Herbert Leasholme in the streets of the Indian city was not untrue to his word.

When Lady Norman Hedley landed at Bristol he landed also.

Once only during the voyage had he addressed her.

"Madame," he said, with a deferential bow, "forgive me if I presume I am speaking to Lady Norman Hedley."

She turned on the deck, saw in his manner no impertinence, and answered, as if in a little perplexity, but quietly:

"I am Lady Norman Hedley. May I ask if you have any business with me?"

"Once more I must ask your pardon. You are about, Lady Hedley, to visit your daughter Evelyn—"

"Sir?"

"And to prevent her marriage with a villain?"

"May I ask your name, sir, and the reason of the interest you take in my affairs?" said Lady Hedley, with more anxiety than she might have cared to show.

"My name," he answered, "would not enlighten you. My motives will show themselves presently. There is a man called Mathew Drake—"

"Who wants to be my daughter's husband—"

"But who is my sister's husband already, and on his way to the gallows as fast as he can gallop," whispered the stranger, with a ferocity of expression that was startling. "Lady Hedley, leave that man to me. He shall never molest your daughter, and as for his wife she will know that when I, Richard Thornton, return to the Black Moat there is something to be done which must not be done by halves."

It was in this way that an understanding was established between the woman at the Black Moat and she who, though a total stranger to it, was the lady of Norman Chase.

But a far deeper interest was awakened in her mind by the young girl who had claimed to be her daughter.

"Tell me," she said, "all you know. Omit nothing, even if it should seem the most trifling triviality."

And Evelyn told the whole story of her life from the day on which Sir Norman had taken her away from the German school, suppressing only one episode—that of the two portraits.

"Show me his grave," was all she uttered, when the strange recital was finished.

"Whose grave?"

"His—Henry Mainwaring's."

"Why, my—what am I call you? I am not your child; you are not my mother. Ah, me! I am indeed a desolate girl. But why do you wish to see that dreadful tomb? It is in the blackest recess of Norman Chase."

"And contains its blackest secret. Show me the way, and I will go alone if it makes you tremble."

But Evelyn would not shrink.

"We had better go," she said, "when the servants have gone to bed. They would be curious, and there are too many whisperings in this house already."

It was so agreed, and on that night they descended into the huge vaults in which generations of the Hedleys lay, and over the first portal of which was an old legend carved—the doggerel stanza:

Into this place
Let none, not of the ancient race,
Living or dead, to enter dare;
The dust cries out beware!

The arch was low and heavy, of true Norman build, and dripping with damp.

It opened into a long series of others, to all appearance ranging in a semi-circle from where they had entered.

Each carried a lamp, but both paused every now and then, each fearful of losing their way in the immense and gloomy crypt.

At length they reached a vault much larger than the rest, and Evelyn guessed that it was beneath the disused chapel in which she had detected Mathew Drake in the act of substituting the forged for the genuine will.

"The coffin," she said, "was lowered through that place in the roof where you see a white slab. There is a false grave above it to conceal the aperture. We shall find what we are looking for here."

The shadows and the silence of that awful cloister were strangely oppressive to the young girl.

The stillness was absolute.

Even the sound of their own footsteps was deadened by the dust.

Round the vault lay a number of sarcophagi, at each of which Lady Norman peered with trembling anxiety.

At length she whispered:

"This is it."

There it stood, huge and black, with the simple inscription:

In Memory of
HENRY MAINWARING.
Died at Norman Chase.

Then, to Evelyn's inexpressible amazement, Lady Norman flung her arms over the heavy marble slab, pressed her face upon its cold surface, and gave vent to a passionate outburst of tears.

She laid her hand on that of the unhappy woman, now literally convulsed with grief, but was gently pushed away.

Long and bitter was this outpouring of that which, to the young girl, seemed an utterly inexplicable sorrow.

Who was she—this lady—who had entered thus suddenly into her life, and deepened the clouds and discoloured the lights around it?

What was she to Henry Mainwaring, and what had Henry Mainwaring been to her?

There was some fearful secret remaining to be told.

Else how was it that this woman, of an aspect so pure and noble, and of manners so touchingly tender, was breaking her heart above a grave, bearing no name of hers, as though she had been bereaved on her bridal day?

After a long lapse of time, the young girl again ventured to attract the attention of that Niobe who was, as she feared, giving up her life upon that inscrutable tombstone.

"Lady Norman!" she said, touching her very gently.

Lady Norman rose, and looking her blankly in the face, answered:

"How long have I been here? Have you been with me all the time?"

"Dear Lady Norman, I don't know how long we have been here, but the lamps are nearly burnt out, and there is never a ray of daylight down here."

They made their way in perfect silence back to the upper world, and, as if instinctively, re-

turned to the room in which Evelyn had dreamed her most beautiful dreams of happiness and peace, hallowed by love, in the future. Lady Norman kissed her on the brow.

"And now, Evelyn," she said, "we have been strangely thrown together. Whatever the relation between us, it gives me a right to protect you. What are we to do with that man?"

"Mathew? I told him what I should do."

"You must not do it. If ever happiness is to return to this house he and all his secrets must be dragged to light at the same time."

"Dear Lady Norman, he shall not come here. I have endured too much from him already. He shall see that I am mistress."

But no, she was not mistress, and Lady Hedley gently reminded her of it, adding:

"It is fortunate for your own sake. Trust me, child. He shall not escape; but that he is not far off I feel sure. And he does not abandon his suit for your hand?"

"Of that, at least, I am mistress," interrupted Evelyn, in a fiery tone, "and I would die rather than give it to him."

"There is nothing—there is no one in the world for whose sake you would make the sacrifice?"

"Nothing—no one. No one would have a right to ask me. I may pass through this life in utter loneliness, hoping, wickedly, perhaps, that my sorrows may be shortened, but marry that man! Never! It would be infamous. Besides, what did that woman say at the Black Moat?"

"She hinted, you told me, that it was in her power, as a last resource, to save you from him—that he was her husband. Well, he is."

"Then let us go there, and appeal to her."

"If she is to be found. Evelyn, for a chance of marrying you he would murder her, and he would murder you for the sake of Norman Chase."

"Then can nothing be done?" cried the young girl, piteously; "yes, I can hide myself abroad. I will take nothing under the Mainwaring will."

"Do not touch it—there is blood upon it!" exclaimed Lady Norman, in a voice in which passion seemed mingled with fear.

"I will not. But you will let me have some of my jewellery, and I daresay they would have their old pupil back as a teacher at the Emmerich school. I could not part with the locket, but the rest I might sell."

"Locket, Evelyn! You did not mention them. Are they very precious to you? Are they gifts?"

Evelyn felt intensely angry with herself for mentioning them.

She was convinced that they contained a clue to the bewildering mystery of her life. But why should she fear?

Whatever truth remained to be told must be told at one time or other, and the lofty candour of her nature revolted at a deception.

"I did purposely omit to mention them, dear Lady Norman," she said, while a scarlet blush brightened her cheek, "because I thought there might be something connected with them that I had no right to speak of."

"They were given you—by whom?"

"One by Henry Mainwaring; the other by Sir Norman Hedley."

Evidently Lady Norman was struggling against some powerful and painful emotion.

She rose and paced the room.

It was some minutes before she spoke again, her colour coming and going like that of one now faint unto death, and now panting back to life.

"Did they contain anything?"

"Yes. Some inscriptions in an Indian language, and in English. I could make nothing of them."

"That was not all?"

"There were two portraits."

"Two!" exclaimed Lady Norman, with unaffected surprise, her countenance appearing to clear up marvellously. "One in each?"

"One in Henry Mainwaring's, which I saw first, and the face was——"

"Whose?"

"Yours."

"And the other—in Sir Norman's?"

"Yours also."

Lady Norman flung up her hands with a long, low cry, covered her eyes, and wept as she had wept over the tombstone below.

Recovering presently, however, she said, with curious calmness:

"Let me see them."

And when she did see them she sat as if fascinated, gazing from one to the other, but always, in the intervals, fixing an eager scrutiny upon the face of the young girl at her side.

"You are very young," she said, at length, "to have known so much sorrow. But so had she at your age."

(To be Continued.)

VICARS AND VICARAGES.

If in the present day we choose to think of the Church merely as a profession, it is doubtless a most popular one. Yet this social popularity and dignity, however agreeable to its members, is sometimes the cause of a deal of trouble in purely mundane matters. The clergyman is a gentleman, and most certainly he should be one; but the word "gentleman" too many of us nowadays define as a man of position who lives in certain style and in a certain sized house and with a certain number of servants, for without these advantages no one has the slightest right to consider himself entitled to any sort of respect.

It is most unsatisfactory also to have to confess that even the clergy of our Church are constantly being judged by this low-minded, snobbish criterion of excellence. The clergyman is obliged to keep up appearances unless he wishes to lose the respect of his parishioners. Often, too, even if he be a strong-minded man, prepared to fight the question out at all hazards, he is at length, for the sake of peace, obliged to succumb before the determined advance of the legions of snobbery, and the result is too often what might be expected by anyone who feels inclined to think the subject quietly over. The clergyman, by keeping up appearances, has exceeded his income, and has become an impecunious, poverty-stricken man, and when once he has fallen, those who were the sole cause of his misfortune are the very first to point the finger of scorn.

There is one practice, however, of inducing, or rather compelling, the clergyman to spend more than he can properly afford, which is certainly most ingenious in its cruelty. Many a young curate has been brought to debt and disgrace by being made the special object of the affection of co-charitable and well-to-do congregations. The young curate has made himself so popular that his admirers determine on building a church for him; and further to show their generosity, they actually build him a vicarage. Of course the church, with its £300 a year, is an excellent thing for the clever, gentlemanly young man, but the vicarage "means ruin." In most cases the vicarage is a house so large, that an income of at least £800 a year is absolutely necessary to keep it up in consistent style.

Further too, as the vicar has been raised to his position by his congregation, all its members regard themselves as his personal friends, and as his personal friends expect him to treat them to a considerable amount of hospitality, and on a small £300 a year all these wonders are expected of the unfortunate clergyman. If anyone ventures to make a remark upon the vicarage being too large a house for the vicar's stipend, the answer always is "he lives rent free."

Still, as people as a rule have an objection to live in a house without its being furnished, and as a staff of servants is always requisite in proportion with the size of a house, the clergyman

living rent free certainly cannot cover all the expenses necessarily occasioned; in fact, the new vicarage is often the new vicar's white elephant, and it is high time that this foolish—nay, cruel and misplaced—generosity should discontinue.

If we wish to respect the Church, we should never see it out at elbows, and by encouraging our poorer clergy to inconsistent extravagance, we only help them to disgrace and contempt.

HER GUIDING STAR;

OR,

LOVE AND TREACHERY.

CHAPTER VII.

THE day for Cyril's departure came, and with a manly front, but a throbbing heart, he bade farewell to his friends.

As he turned for a last look at the dear old weather-beaten house, with its roof descending to the very tops of the windows, that seemed to look out from the projecting eaves like eyes from under overhanging brows, he cast many tender thoughts to this shelter of his helpless years, and devoutly asked that peace might rest upon it till he should see it again.

According to her custom, Mrs. Pope sought her consolation in work; and after adjusting Cyril's deserted room, religiously preserving every article he had left, and locking the door, she was "flying round," as she termed it, in search of other safety-valves for her excited sensibility, when a well-known voice met her ear and a man entered the kitchen singing.

"Why, Pat," she exclaimed, "is that you? Where have you been? I began to mistrust you were lost, and that I'd never set eyes on you again. When did you come back?"

Before he answers he must be more particularly introduced than he has yet been. He now reappeared after a tramp in his commercial capacity, with his pack on his back, instead of a gun, or a pole suspending a string of fish.

Having been "on the circuit," as he dignified his calling, he wore the remains of a military cap, part of his array when serving in the gallant—th.

The "regimentals" themselves, still in existence, were reserved for St. Patrick's Day and other extra occasions.

In person, short and thick, with a slight limp in his gait, a full ruddy face, a pleasant smile, quick grey eyes—in one a cast, which gave to his countenance a comical and roguish expression; hair slightly turned and thinned, more by hardship than years; such was Pat's outward man.

"Not see me again! Why, ma'am, I'm the sort that always comes back. Them that's no use to nobody"—with a self-satisfied air—"is always sartin to come back."

"Now, Pat, don't go for to be modest, or I shall be really uneasy about you."

"Well, then, ma'am, you shan't have no concern about me on that account. When did I come? Why this very minute, and of course I couldn't pass your door."

"And you haven't had no breakfast, I know; so sit down and you shall have a hot rasher."

While she prepared it and bustled about, he disencumbered himself of his pack, and stretched his legs on the settle, giving forth, according to his custom, scraps of old songs.

At length, seating him at the table, Mrs. Pope rested for a few moments from her labours; but such a gloom gathered over her face that Pat remarked it, and resting his knife and fork, exclaimed:

"What ails you, ma'am? Anything happened?"

"No, I'm well enough, only rather tired, getting up so early to help Mr. Cyril off."

"Mr. Cyril off!" repeated Pat, with a look of consternation. "Where? What for?"

The housekeeper gave the required information.

"Well, if I a'n't sorry! Gone to London! What shall I do without him?"

"You!" said Mrs. Pope, her feeling of personal loss aggravated by anyone presuming to share it. "What shall I do?"

"Why, ma'am, I've known him off and on 'most as long as you have, and a pleasanter lad, boy, and man, I never see. And didn't I teach him to use a gun, when you went into fits about the powder? No more danger in't than in so much black pepper, if folks is only careful; and didn't I teach him to bait his hook, and show him the best places? And didn't he come every day to see me when I got the fever? And when people told him 'twas catchin', in partic'lar for young folks, didn't he say, like a brave boy, he couldn't die but once, and he better do so then, than to desert a friend in distress? And didn't he bring me nice things that you made for me, and read the papers for me? No, don't tell me. I shall miss him, and I will miss him!"

This eulogy of her favourite, with the allusion to her own kindness, silenced and softened that housekeeper.

"Why didn't he go into the army," continued Pat, "if he must go away? That's the place for him. They say we're goin' to have a brush with the French, and he'd be a major gin'ral in no time."

"Army! Don't speak of it. Killin' and slaughterin' folks! He's fit for somethin' better than that."

"Come, come, ma'am! no more of that. Don't go for to abuse the army. Who keeps the country quiet now but the soldiers? Who puts down white boys, and mobs and riots, but the soldiers? Killin' and slaughterin', indeed! I don't like that better than you; but if my country and glory says so, you know—"

Then he sang a tender comical air with appropriate gestures.

"Don't be an idiot, Pat. Be quiet, and eat your breakfast. I ha'n't no spirits for such trash."

"Mrs. Pope, my dear, you must do as we soldiers do. We bury a comrade to the tune of the 'Dead March'; but, that done, we come back in double quick time. You've done all you could for the lad, and now he's gone; but, instead of takin' on, you must cheer up for what remains."

"That's true, Pat. Shall I cook you another rasher?"

"No, thank ye, ma'am; I've had a royal breakfast—a dainty dish to set before a king. Now to business. You don't ask me nothin' about my luck."

"No, more I haven't! Well, how was it?"

"Why, the circuit was better than common. I've sold pretty nigh everything, all but one shawl, and, that I had a notion you'd like. See, here it is."

"That is nice; but no, I don't want it."

"Oh, you couldn't have this particular one if you did. This is promised; but if so be you liked it, I know where I could find its fellow for you."

"Promised!" said Mrs. Pope, with another glance at what now seemed to have acquired a new value in her eyes. "Who to?"

"A very pretty young woman at one of the quality houses. She wouldn't take it now because she hadn't the money; and, though I offered to trust her she said, like a sensible gal, she'd wait till I come again, and so here it goes into my pack for her."

"That's a very nice shawl," said the housekeeper, "and if 'twasn't promised, I don't know but—"

"Let me throw it over your shoulders just to see if it looks as well on you as it did on her; for, though you can not have this one, I dare say—I'm 'most sartin—that I can get one like it."

Mrs. Pope submitted to have the shawl put on, and looked in the glass approvingly.

"No; if I can't have this I won't have any. I have heard that story often enough. There ain't never two things jest alike."

"Well, ma'am, I like to be accommodatin',

you know. It may be six months afore I go to the neighbourhood again, and she may change her mind by then—women's apt to—and I didn't promise positively. So, as you like it, it is yours;" and, leaving the tempting 'article' floating about her, he proceeded, with all despatch, to close his pack, while she, with her usual promptness, produced the money. As she handed it to him, she said: "I quite forgot, Pat, with all our talk, to ask about your leg. How can it stand such long tramps all over creation? It can't trouble you any longer, I should think."

"Oh," replied he, limping badly at the suggestion, "don't speak of it. I try to forget it; for you know I must keep movin'; besides, a fellow that has stepped to such music as I have, hates to go halting about like a beggar. No, no, ma'am; my poor leg will never better in this world, and my pension wouldn't pay, if 'twasn't for the thought of how I a'n'd it. And now, good-mornin', ma'am," and he was off.

At the close of a cheerless day, Cyril found himself in the great metropolis, and hiring a coach, was soon in that quarter of the town in which Mr. Farleigh resided.

His ring at the door was answered by a grave-looking serving-man, who, on being told his name, asked him to walk in.

"I am expected, then," thought he: "so much the better; I am not come too soon."

He was ushered into a room—which he soon comprehended to be the library—furnished with heavy mahogany chairs, high, straight-backed, and black with age; seats covered with crimson moreen, and window-curtains of the same material.

Bookcases of the same dark wood, with glass doors, filled the recesses of the room, and a Turkey carpet covered the floor.

On the centre of the mantel-piece was a richly-cased clock, of old-fashioned form, and no glass or china was allowed to glitter near it. Good maps were hung wherever space admitted of them, but no "objet d'art" relieved the grave aspect of the room, evidently furnished according to the taste of one opposed to innovation.

By a round table, very dark, whose polished surface reflected the lights from two candles in tall, massive silver candlesticks, in a library-chair—the only thing in the room in which ease appeared to have been consulted—was seated a middle-aged gentleman.

He was reading, but he laid down his book and turned his eyes to the door as Cyril entered, who, to cut short all uncertainty, advanced, and presented Mr. Fairfax's letter, the superscription of which announced the bearer.

"Ah!" said Mr. Farleigh, now first partly rising from his chair, and coldly motioning to another, "Mr. Ashleigh—be seated, sir."

Cyril obeyed, and Mr. Farleigh, having read his letter, folded and laid it down.

"You left Mr. Fairfax well, I hope."

"Yes, sir."

"Your journey has not been very fatiguing, I suppose. Hardy habits make one indifferent to such things."

Cyril bowed. A day at sea, and three days and two nights in the mail-coach, was not pleasant, but not to be spoken of.

A silence ensued, which neither seemed to care to break.

Presently the clock struck the hour of tea, and Mr. Farleigh rang the bell.

A tea-tray was brought in, rich with highly-wrought silver; another, on which were the only edibles—bread and butter, in slices incredibly thin, on a china plate, and, on another, biscuits.

These constituted the substantial of the meal, which, to our hungry young traveller, promised rather to provoke than to satisfy his appetite.

Then Mrs. Farleigh entered—a lady somewhat past her prime, but still comely, with "gracious womanhood and gravitie," well harmonising with her puce-coloured silk dress.

Her handkerchief, of the finest India muslin,

was disposed over her bosom in what was called "a caw," from the voluminous expanse of which peeped a "modesty piece."

She wore a cap, with a full lace border descending low at the ears, and a white satin bow in front; a thin muslin apron, ornamented with tambour work, and black lace mitts nearly meeting the sleeve, which terminated at the elbow.

"Mrs. Farleigh," said her husband, "here is Mr. Ashleigh, whom Mr. Fairfax has sent to us."

Cyril bowed, in deference to the lady, not to the manner of his introduction. She courtesied slightly, said in a gentle tone she was happy to see Mr. Ashleigh, and passed to the ministrations of the tea-table.

Just in the shadow of Mrs. Farleigh, like a little satellite in attendance on its primary, was a fair young girl, in her fifteenth spring.

Had a passport been made out for her, it might have run somewhat in this wise: Face oval; complexion fair, and so clear that, with every emotion that stirred the young blood, it mantled in her cheek to the richest bloom.

Eyes full and finely set—hue indescribable; some would say grey, some hazel, and others blue.

"Eyebrows of the graces." Eyelids well fringed. Nose not classical, but nevertheless, a very proper nose. Mouth perfect, revealing teeth far superior to pearls—whatever poets may say—and little dimples in which Love and Frolic played.

"This, Mr. Ashleigh," said Mr. Farleigh, "is my daughter, Miss Jessie Farleigh."

The young lady courtesied; Cyril returned a bow as cold and distant as if prescribed by her father.

Had they met in Meremoor under the same circumstances, he would have involuntarily extended his hand in token of the friendly relations he hoped to establish between himself and his pupil; but he readily understood that here it would be regarded as a liberty, and he was perfectly satisfied to omit it.

"If the face," thought he, "be an index to the brain, I shall not have much difficulty as a teacher."

The tea was not enlivened by many words. When the tray was removed, Mrs. Farleigh took up her shuttle and busied herself with knotting, and Jessie seated herself by her with her filigree-work.

"What on earth those taper fingers were about! why those narrow gold-edged strips of paper of all colours were thus rolled up, and then carefully disposed of," Cyril could not divine, and the knotting too was equally a mystery, unaccustomed as he was to the elegant trifles with which ladies occupied themselves.

Mrs. Farleigh, with the "pleasant ways of womankind," made some attempts at conversation, to relieve what she thought must be the awkward situation of Cyril; but, though kind, she was mistaken; he was simply tired, and soon requested permission to retire.

He was accordingly lighted to the attic by the servant who had admitted him; and, having placed his candle on a table, he surveyed the room; then, looking from the window to the street, which seemed immeasurably beneath him, he thought:

"Well, I am nearer the sky than I have ever been before, I believe, so I may be said to be rising in the world; but I am mortally hungry. Oh, for a cold cut from Mrs. Pope's buttery. I have not gone so superluc to bed since I was a 'hop-o'-my-thumb' under her discipline. But sleep will cure all. If I have not the first, I am sure of the second."

CHAPTER VIII.

In the morning Cyril was shown into the dining-room, where he perceived more decoration.

With the same generally substantial character was intermingled modern taste, showing that

innovation had been less sternly resisted in the female department.

The mahogany furniture was carved instead of plain. The walls were hung with a handsome French paper, and a large commodious sofa and stuffed arm-chairs gave an air of luxury to the room.

On the mantel-piece was a French clock, where the flight of time was enlivened by cupids. But this concession to the present generation was indemnified by the china shepherds and shepherdesses, the admiration of the preceding, that supported it on either side; and these, again, were flanked by lustres of recent date.

A large mirror, so placed as to reflect these adornments, was richly set in the fantastic taste of the Louis Quatorze period; but the thousand fanciful trifles that fill every inch of space in the present parlours and drawing-rooms then were not.

Cyril found the family assembled. A few moments intervened before breakfast, during which Jessie read, or appeared to read, and, having nothing else to do, Cyril occupied himself in looking at her.

She seemed to him even prettier than on the previous evening; or it might be that, having volunteered a "good-morning, Mr. Ashleigh," as he entered, he was disposed to regard her more favourably.

The breakfast over, and Mr. Farleigh having read his papers, he said:

"I am going to my office now, Mr. Ashleigh, and, as you may like to look a little about you before commencing your regular occupation, we will say nothing of it at present. If I am not otherwise engaged this afternoon, I purpose to have some preparatory talk with you in the library."

Cyril had only to assent, and deferring his exploration of the city, he retired to his room to write to Mr. Fairfax.

Two o'clock was the dinner-hour. When he entered the room he found the family already seated at table, and, in addition, two guests. Mr. Farleigh motioned to Cyril to take a chair at his left hand, and said:

"This is Mr. Ashleigh, gentlemen, of whom I spoke to you."

Of the persons so addressed, one raised his eyes with a slight inclination of the head; the other, turning towards him a face from which a laugh had not quite passed, gave him a careless, good-natured nod, and proceeded with his conversation.

But, however little the notice bestowed on Cyril, his own attention was at once engaged by the gentleman last mentioned.

In age he seemed about thirty-five; in stature, short and thick set.

The lower part of his face was mirthful, but there was power in his well-developed forehead, and quickness in his deep-set, vivacious grey eyes.

An observer might have safely pronounced him as acute in argument as in jest irresistible, while the negligent enjoyment of his air showed that business and care sat lightly on him.

They were both lawyers, and the conversation, though chiefly professional, was animated and agreeable.

Dull points of law were enforced by a joke, and humorous anecdotes confirmed "grave precedents," in all of which the gentleman referred to excelled.

The dinner was so bountiful that Cyril comprehended the scanty tea.

At the proper time, one gentleman begged to take wine with Mr. Farleigh, and the one who had so much attracted Cyril asked the same favour of Miss Jessie, seated next to him.

Mr. Farleigh without speaking filled Cyril's glass, as he would have done that of a child or an inferior; but having done so turned away and continued to converse with his guests. Cyril left his wine untouched.

The gentleman, after talking with Jessie, seemed disposed to some farther acquaintance with her.

"And so, young lady, you are learning Latin,

mathematics, and of course the whole circle of sciences, eh?"

Jessie, blushing, replied:

"Only a little, sir."

"Very well; the less the better. Let me give you a word of advice. I can spare it, for I get plenty of it."

A laugh from the others seemed confirmatory.

"Don't mind them; they are laughing, not at you, but at me. Now for my advice. Don't spoil those pretty eyes by hard study, for one of these days some very clever fellow will rather have you conjugate for him in plain English the verb 'to love,' indicative mode, present tense, first person singular, than that you should speak all the dead languages. Besides—another thing—you like to dance?"

"Yes, sir," said Jessie, with a smile.

"Ah, I thought so; but you can never dance well in 'blue stockings'—no lady ever did. Take care of the heels. The head—your head, certainly—will take care of itself."

"Bad advice!" exclaimed Mrs. Farleigh; "very bad advice, sir! You'll spoil my daughter."

"My dear madame, don't you perceive that I am acting on the defensive? Young ladies will be treading on our heels if they neglect their own. In fifty years they'll be contending for the right to vote, for seats on the bench, and professors' chairs, if they are allowed to go on. We must check them, or we men shall be extinct—among the lost races. Latin and mathematics! Why, my dear madame, 'tis a repetition of the 'original sin!' Knowledge to women! 'tis the forbidden fruit. No, no; samples and receipt books for ever."

Mrs. Farleigh shook her head, but did not refuse a smile.

"I am sorry to say," continued the gentleman, "what must needs shock your conjugal reverence; but your husband is the most inconsistent man I know."

"Inconsistent! I cannot think it."

"No, I daresay not; but I can prove it. No man more alarmed than he at the progress of the age, and yet he puts the greatest leveller into the hands least able to use it discreetly—knowledge to women. Why, we shall beat the French. Instead of one goddess of reason every town and village will be overrun with them."

Jessie listened, but not with an undivided attention.

She was puzzling herself to discover what the gentleman could mean by dancing in "blue stockings!" and she cast a furtive glance at Cyril as she "wondered if Mr. Ashleigh knew."

But she had no time to speculate on his countenance, for he rose at the moment to leave the room, saying to Mr. Farleigh:

"I will attend you in the library, sir, when you please to send for me."

"Very well," replied Mr. Farleigh, but without suggesting that he should stay longer.

Expecting a summons, Cyril remained within, instead of taking the walk he had promised himself; but he received no call till the hour of tea, and then no apology for the omission.

The same formal meal succeeded, after which Mr. Farleigh had an engagement, and Cyril was left with Mrs. Farleigh and her daughter.

(To be Continued.)

POETRY.

WHAT is poetry? It is not merely the melody of verse, or the spirit of passion and emotion embodied in verse. It is a revelation from heaven of its own beauty and glory; an atmosphere of heaven breathed down and diffused through our grosser one, by which we become sensible of the strength of joy in the heart, of the moral greatness of our better nature! of the treasures of past intellect, and the full grandeur and rainbow splendour of human hopes.

It is this spirit that is continually lifting us out of the clay of the earth—out of the gross-

ness of our animal condition, to a perception of wider views, intenser being, more generous, glowing and ethereal aspirations. It is like that suffusion of purple and violet light cast down from the evening sun over the mountains which, however beautiful in themselves, derive a tenfold and heavenly beauty from it. It is not so much a part of ourselves, as the spirit of an eternal and divine world which moulds and incorporates us into itself, and changes us from what we are to what we are to be.

Let no man fall into the grievous mistake that poetry only lives in verse—nor that it is confined to language at all. It is a far and widely-diffused spirit, and lives in all human hearts, more or less, and often in greater effluence than we imagine. It cannot always throw itself into language.

A REMEDY.

Most people who "fall into flesh" desire to reduce their corpulency. The very best and safest way to get rid of superfluous fat is to work it off, walk or run it off. This may be aided by eating food which contains a large amount of nitrogen and a small amount of carbon. Nitrogenous food is that which gives strength, power to work, as lean meats; carbonaceous foods are those which make fat, such as cheese, potatoes, rice, corn, pulse, beans, tapioca, arrow-root, corn-starch, milk, sugar, syrup and all oily and fat food. Raw fruit and berries, largely eaten, are great aids to reducing weight.

ACCIDENTS TO CHILDREN.

It is a common occurrence for children to get beans, grains of corn or other substances up their noses. The following is a simple remedy, and is worth remembering: Order the child to open its mouth; apply your mouth to it, and blow rather hard. The offending substance will be expelled from the nostril. It would naturally be supposed that a person who had once witnessed the success of this expedient would never forget it, and yet I know a mother of excellent memory on general subjects, who, after seeing a bean thus expelled from the nose of her own child, failed to recall the expedient when a similar occasion presented itself four or five years afterwards. Hence the necessity of republishing the same scrap of valuable information from time to time.

THE BEST PART OF THE DAY.

EARLY morning, which is beyond doubt the best part of the day, is in a great measure lost by most persons. There is no question of it. It is either lost in sleep—between sleeping and waking—feeble efforts to rise—buttoning up the toilet, or in a state of trifling indecision what to take hold of first. Let habit have its due influence in the case, and there can be no doubt but that early morning is the most advantageous time for effort of any kind, physical or mental.

What an important part of most people's lives are lost. Sir Walter Scott's evidence in anything which relates to experience in great performances will be taken without reserve. He says:

"When I got over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times a passage in a poem, it has always been when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself when I am at a loss, 'We shall have it at six o'clock to-morrow morning.' If I have forgotten a circumstance or a name, or a copy of verses, it is the same thing."

MODESTY.—A beautiful flower that flourishes only in secret places.

THE MYSTERY OF RAVENSWALD:

A TALE OF THE FIRST CRUSADE.

CHAPTER VI.

Like sustains in a cloudlet nestling
They look in nightly casques are rested.

"You are right, Elfrida. No more of Lienel. You said you watched him out of sight?"

"Yes, lady; and when I could see him no longer, I continued my watch in the other direction until I saw the Baron of Wartenfels conducted to Tancred's apartment. Then I took advantage of the knowledge which Father Clement gave us, and sought a hiding-place in the secret passage between that room and the closet of the room adjoining.

"Not only was the partition exceedingly thin, but there were slight crevices in the woodwork, and corresponding holes in the tapestry. I heard every word as plainly as I could have heard had I been at the duke's elbow. And I discovered another thing: you remember the monk told us that the secret passages were so cunningly contrived that a sound in one of them would appear to come from another direction.

"A tickling in my throat caused me to cough, and the baron heard it, and thought it came from behind him, which was on the very opposite side. Tancred started up, and looked out into the passage on that side. I was sorely frightened, but no harm was done, and I was glad to escape so easily.

"Oh! dear mistress—my blessed lady! You know not what a monster the grand duke is! Listen; thus hath he planned. He will give your hand to the dark Baron of Wartenfels this very night. His own confessor—his abject slave and puppet, called Father Villmer—is to be called in to the consummation. The marriage contract is drawn up and signed, and your presence, with the wicked mumbling of the false priest, is all that is necessary to make you Baroness of Wartenfels."

Lady Mary caught her maid by the arm, and looked into her honest face with unshrinking steadiness.

"Elfrida, answer me this, if you can: What is the Lord of Ravenswald, Grand Duke of Swabia, to gain by such unseemly and summary disposal of my hand?"

"Thank fortune, dear lady, I can give you the information you require; and a part of it I gained from Tancred's own private cogitations, when he was thinking aloud. First, I know that he is not your father. Your suspicions in that direction have not led you astray; but of your true parentage I have not heard a whisper, save that both he and the baron call you Princess. However that your family is of great consequence is evident from the eagerness with which Wartenfels seeks your hand, and from the bargain which the grand duke drives with him.

"There is some power, or benefit of some kind, to be derived through yourself which they are to share. Also, the baron is to become vassal to the duke, and to furnish men and arms when required. All this is based upon the possession of your hand by Sir Gerard. Now, you ask, why this haste?

I can tell you. First, there are, at this present moment, two noble knights in the castle, one from Stuttgart, and the other from Tübingen, who seek your hand; and others there be who are pressing their suit. To them the grand duke would be able to say, that you are already wed. But there is a reason more potent than this. From some source which I cannot divine, Tancred has received a hint that efforts are to be made to take you away from him. This thing frightens him, and for this alone he might give you into Wartenfels' keeping."

And then Elfrida related more nearly in detail the conversation which she had overheard between Tancred and the dark knight of Wartenfels.

At length the lady comprehended the whole wicked plot against her peace and happiness. She knew how powerless she was—how completely the grand duke was her master and her irresponsible tyrant.

She arose and paced a few times to and fro across the apartment, and finally stopped and laid her hand upon her companion's arm.

"Elfrida, the hour has come when I must seek the help and protection offered by the friars of Saint John. Surely no time is to be lost. Hast thou the courage to go with me, in the midst of this storm?"

"Oh, how can you ask it, lady? My life is yours; that is enough. Command me. And, remember—with the secret of the passage of the crypts in our possession, we may not be exposed to the storm at all. Shall I procure lanterns?"

"Yes, dear girl. Go you and get what we need in that respect, and I will make ready our wardrobe. Be circumspect, for I know that I am narrowly watched."

The maid promised that she would make all preparations in secret, and with this she took a candle, and passed out into an ante-chamber, and thence into a passage that led towards the rear of the keep.

She had no thought of eavesdroppers or spies so near.

She did not know that her every movement away from her lady's chamber had been watched for several days.

Little dreamed she that a shadowy form emerged from a dark corner into the passage behind her, hanging silently and stealthily upon her steps whithersoever she went.

Mary of Ravenswald had never regarded Tancred as a child would regard a true father, and she had felt, even while willing to admit that he might be the author of her existence, as though he were more the unloving, exacting tyrant than the true-hearted parent.

So she had never loved him, and had come early to fear him, and at times, almost to hate him.

Though she did not believe Tancred to be her father, she had no means of supplying the blank thus made in the record of her life. Whether she was the offspring of slaves, or of gentle blood, she had no means of determining, though the probabilities were that her family at least stood as high as Tancred had stood before putting on the crown of Swabia.

She had reflected much upon the subject, spending long and weary hours in studying such bits of evidence as came within her reach, and had come, in the end, to regard the grand duke as her worst enemy.

He had never been cruel in the way of abuse, nor had he sought to inflict suffering; but his whole bearing had been that of the master rather than of the father, and he had sought obedience rather than love.

In fact, he had never seemed to care for her love at all.

His every look and speech had borne testimony that he had no faith in her affection, and because she had not smiled and fawned and bowed to him he had distrusted her, and of late she had been little else than a prisoner in the castle.

And now had come the putting on of the capstone of iniquity.

She was to be given in marriage to a man old enough to be her father—a man whom she both dreaded and detested—a man who was known, far and near, to be nothing more nor less than a chief of forest banditti.

If she remained in the castle the blow would fall, and she would have no power to ward it off.

So she had resolved that she would flee. A kind-hearted monk of the abbey—Father Clement by name—had proved to her his devoted friendship, and him she was resolved to trust.

Once, after her maid had gone, while engaged in gathering up the few articles of clothing she would need, and her jewels, she stopped, and asked herself if she were doing wisely. Was it wise, or was it maidently, thus to flee from the only home she had ever known, to seek the protection of those of whom she knew comparatively nothing?

One thought of the dark-visaged Baron of Wartenfels was enough to hold her to her purpose.

To remain at Ravenswald meant simply to become the wife of that man. What fate could be more dreadful?

She went on with her work, and when her maid returned she had all in readiness.

Elfrida had brought a small lantern, and with it a cunning little contrivance for striking fire.

This latter was a small tube of metal, closed at one end, in the chamber of which worked an air-tight piston.

In the head of this piston was a cavity fashioned to hold a bit of punk or touch-wood; and with the punk in place, the piston might be inserted into the chamber of the barrel, and driven down with force enough to ignite the inflammable fungus.

The princess had made up a bundle of the things she wished to take, but the maid, with a smile, made it up after her, and when there was nothing more to do they started upon their journey.

Mary's prayer for guidance and support was audible, but she was not weak.

It would be natural that her heart should flutter, and that her breath should be quickened, for it was no common thing she was undertaking.

They went out by the same way which Elfrida had last taken, locking the chamber after them, and taking the key.

The lamp of the lantern was lighted, but not exposed, for they would have light enough from the sconces of the halls and passages for a time, and, besides, a moving light might expose them.

When they had reached the covered way that led to the old keep, where the lighted sconces were all behind them, they stopped while Elfrida moved back the slide of her lantern.

When she had done this she met the gaze of her mistress and saw that it bore the shadow of a great anxiety.

"Dear lady," she said, "if you have allowed a doubt of my ability to guide you to enter your mind I beg that you will dismiss it at once. I know the way very well, and can open every secret door. Father Clement has been very particular in his instructions, and I am sure I shall make no mistakes. If there are other dangers, we must meet them as best we can; but let us hope we shall not meet such. Remember, we are to traverse a region seldom visited by the inmates of the castle, and though it may be gloomy and ghostly, it is all the more safe for that."

"Go on, Elfrida. I am not afraid. I am only afraid of the Castle of Ravenswald, and would be free from it as quickly as possible. Ha! Hark! Heard you that footfall?"

"Most likely the flapping of the wings of a bat, dear lady. If you were as used to these passages as I am—and that is not much—you would not start at such sounds. We shall hear many of them, and louder, before we reach our journey's end."

Lady Mary listened a few moments, and hearing nothing more, she signified her readiness to move on.

The way for a short distance was through a low-arched, narrow passage, at the far end of which was a door, which was opened without a key; and having passed this they were in the old keep.

A short distance further brought them to what had evidently been once a guard-room, as there were the stone benches around against the walls, and racks for pikes and axes.

It was a dismal place, and even Elfrida would have shuddered had not her desire to sustain

her mistress been stronger than any other influence.

This old keep, or donjon, was a compact, solid structure, the stones of large size, and firmly laid.

At the base it was nearly square, affording on one side apartments for offices and retiring rooms, and on the other, occupying full half the area, was the great old hall of state.

Above, the keep was fashioned into two massive towers—one of them very high—with embattled summits, and divided within into a variety of apartments, most of them for sleeping.

Beneath the castle proper, partly afforded by a natural cavern, and partly excavated from the native rock by human labour, were chambers more vast than were those above—chambers in which an army might have found shelter and room for rest.

Beyond this guard-room they came to a small hall, on one side of which was a raised platform, with a table upon it, while a little way in front was a curious shaped block, with tattered, mouldy remnants of black cloth dangling from its sides.

Mary might not have noticed this particularly had not another object caught her eye—an object lying upon the pavement, and partly covered by the sable tatters.

She bent over to examine it more closely, and Elfrida turned the light of her lantern upon it.

A cry of horror burst from the lady's lips. It was an axe, with great spots of rust upon its broad, crescent-shaped blade. And the rust seemed to have been caused by something thicker than water.

"Oh, this is horrible!" the princess uttered, starting away from the ghastly relic.

"This was the hall of judgment in the years long ago," said Elfrida. "Father Clement told me that he had attended more than one poor wretch whose life had gone out upon that block. But we will not think of that. Let us hasten on."

"Do we not go by the way of the great hall?" asked Mary, as her companion started in another direction.

"No," answered the attendant. "There are doors that way which must be unlocked, and of which Father Clement has the keys. The way we go is full as near, though we must traverse a short distance exposed to the storm; but I think the storm is abating. The thunder is not so loud, nor is the rain so copious."

Yet the rain was falling, and the gale was howling through the forest, and as, ever and anon, they passed near to the open loop-holes, the chill drops were driven in upon them.

Beyond the hall of judgment they came to what had once been used as a retiring room for consultation, and on one side they found a closet, in which was an old oaken sideboard. In the rear wall of this closet Elfrida found a stone which was made moveable by pressing upon a concealed spring.

The maid knew the secret, and easily opened the way; and when they had passed through she moved the stone back into its place.

They were now at the head of a flight of steps, and in a passage hidden from the world. Down they went very slowly, for the stones were mouldy and slippery, and they had to be careful of their steps.

At the bottom they found themselves in an arched vault, appearing to be the end of the way, but Elfrida found another hidden door, beyond which they stepped forth into a place the bounds of which were not to be revealed by the poor light of the lantern.

"What place is this?" asked Mary, when she saw how vast it appeared.

"This is called the Crypt of the Tombs, dear lady. Near at hand is the burial-place of vassals. The monuments of the masters are in a far part. The distance to the abbey chapel is not great. If we go directly on we shall reach it very shortly, though for a few moments we shall be exposed to the storm. We could turn back, and pass around by way of the vaults of the barons, thus reaching the chapel

without exposure to the weather, but there are doors between the chapel and the crypt, and if they should chance to be locked, I have not the keys with which to open them."

"Oh, I care not for the storm," said Mary. "If we had the keys I would still prefer the shorter way. Let us make haste. Oh, there is something. Ha! What is that?"

The sombre, sluggish air was awakened by a sound which was not thunder, nor the voice of the blast; and in the far distance, whither Elfrida had pointed as the direction of the knightly place of sepulture, arose a flaring light which was not from the flame of the electric bolt.

It was a light strong enough to relieve from the surrounding gloom some of the taller monuments, and the noise seemed, in part at least, the result of human effort.

"Oh, mercy!" gasped the princess, clutching her companion's arm, "what can it be?"

The stout-hearted servitor, fully realising the great trust which her mistress had reposed in her, was able to maintain herself.

Under other circumstances she might have been far more frightened than was the Lady Mary, for, in truth, the lady was the more morally and spiritually brave of the two; but under existing circumstances the girl felt the weight of solemn duty, and was enabled to bear up.

"Dear lady," she said, with rapid thought, "I may have been over-confident. My steps may have been dogged, and every movement watched, while I felt sure I could not be. If those are human beings they must have come down by way of the great hall; and if they are enemies we shall escape them. Come! the wood is not far distant; ay, it is close at hand. A few brave steps and we are free."

Elfrida took her mistress by the hand, and being careful to keep the narrow bar of light of her lantern directly ahead, she hurried on.

As they advanced, the supporting pillars of native rock were left behind, and the ragged roof hung so low that in some places they were forced to stoop.

At length they reached the rough wall, where the proper manipulation of a concealed spring opened the way to the open air beyond.

As the great stone revolved upon its central pivot, revealing the aperture of passage, Mary felt the rush of fresh, damp air, and heard the voice of the storm.

But they were not yet quite fully exposed to the rain.

The entrance to the crypt was at the inner extremity of a natural cavern, and in this cavern they now stood.

And that we may better understand the present situation, and be prepared to understand others to come, let us look a moment at the surrounding topography.

As has been already shown, the castle occupied the apex of the delta formed by the confluence of the two rivers and the chain of mountains in the rear.

The outer ballium was not much above the level of the banks of the rivers, but the table of rock upon which the fortress was erected rose abruptly from that point, so that the keeps—the old and new—were much higher.

In fact, no two parts of the castle were on the same level.

The barracks were above the ballium; the stables were above the barracks; while the advanced towers of the keep were perched upon a rock which overlooked the highest wall.

With regard to the keeps, or donjons, the oldest was farthest in the rear, and the highest occupying the summit of the rocky promontory which crowned the delta.

When the new keep had been built the outer walls had not been enlarged or spread, but the structure had been suffered to encroach upon the inner ballium.

Beyond the castle wall, to the westward—that is, towards the mountains—there was an abrupt declivity, from the foot of which spread broadly out a beautiful vale, with the rivers at its two ends; with the castellated height upon



[THE ARREST OF THE FUGITIVES.]

its eastern side, and the mountains of the Schwarzwald upon its western: but this latter boundary was cut by one of the most remarkable passes of those wild mountains—a pass which rendered the vale easily accessible from the country beyond.

It was not a transverse valley between two mountains, but a deep cut through the substance of the mountain itself, as though some wondrous convulsion of nature, in the times of long ago, had split the mountain in twain, and moved the pieces away from one another; and this pass, save in one or two places, was wide enough for three or four horsemen to ride abreast.

Thus was an easy communication opened between the outlying country of the Black Forest and the vale of which we have spoken, and it had come to pass that the Carmelite friars, finding the favourable location, and being countenanced by the stout old baron who ruled over Ravenswald at the time, fell in love with the place, and caused to be erected there an abbey for their use, which they called after the abbot who was their spiritual lord—St. John.

The abbey, built of stone, somewhat after the style of the better class of castles, was very near to the eminence on which stood the stout fortress of Ravenswald; and when, later, they erected a chapel separate from the abbey, it was so placed that its eastern porch was within an arrow's flight of the rugged steps that led up the cliff to the castle; and these steps, which afforded the only open and external means of communication between the rear part of the castle and the vale below, had their lower terminus very near to the mouth of the cavern of which we have spoken.

And in this cavern stood the Lady Mary and her maid, having just emerged from the crypt by way of the secret pass.

Elfrida had not yet moved the stone back into its place, her first impulse, upon gaining the cave, having been to see how severe was the storm.

There were still occasional gleams and bolts

of lightning; the wind was high, and the rain was falling; but it was on the wane. The rain was not so copious as it had been, nor was the blast so furious.

"There," said the attendant, as they reached the entrance to the cave just as a flash of lightning revealed the holy pile, "is the chapel. You see it is not far."

"Oh, Elfrida, were it ten times as far I would not hesitate. Let us make all haste. We know not who may be in pursuit. Somebody was behind us, surely."

"Let me close the passage, dear lady, and we will then dart away to the chapel. The path is easy."

The girl had turned back into the cavern when a cry of alarm from her mistress caused her to face about, and as she did so the last glimmer of a lightning flash revealed to her three stout men close to the cave, and in a moment more one of them had his hand upon Mary's arm.

"Pardon me, fair lady, if I am somewhat abrupt on the present occasion. Zounds! this is not the sort of weather at all for such wandering. Your royal father is uneasy on your account, and has bidden me to find you, and lead you back to safety."

Both the girls knew the voice, and knew the man. It was Domblitz, one of Tancred's chief spies and most unscrupulous and willing tools.

He had no heart—no conscience—and cared no more for human suffering than he cared for the writhing of the merest reptile, so that he could serve and please the tyrant master who repaid his services by allowing him to levy contribution upon honest travellers in the forest. And he was not alone.

Two other men of the same stripe were with him, ready to obey his slightest word of command.

Elfrida understood the situation but too well. She remembered the sound which had startled her mistress, and which she had declared to be but the winging of a bat; and she remembered

furthermore, that when she had gone out alone to make preparations for the flight, the same sound had startled her, and that she had been for a time really fearful that her steps were being dogged.

She had felt it by a sort of electric intuition as well as from external signs. But it was too late now to regret. The danger had come, and it must be met.

Oh, should they go back into Tancred's power?

Could she not make an outcry that the monks would hear, and would they not come to the assistance of her dear mistress?

"Help—help—help! Oh, mercy! help!"

So screams Elfrida at the top of her strong voice.

But when she would have repeated the cry one of Domblitz's assistants caught her by the arm, and pressed his hand over her mouth.

He was not strong enough to hold her, however.

And when, in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it, she had freed her head, and sent forth another scream, he called to his companion:

"Ho, Cyprian! Come hither and help me! This girl is a wildcat."

With the help of a second man Elfrida was held secure.

But by this time Mary had recovered her self-possession, and when she heard the struggles and smothered gaspings of her maid she raised her own voice.

With a fierce oath Domblitz caught her up as he would have lifted a child, and then to his followers he shouted:

"Bertram—Cyprian—pick the girl up and follow me. We shall have the whole swarm of monks out upon us if we remain longer here with this uproar. Quick! follow me!"

But they did not follow him, nor did he show them a way, for before Elfrida had been lifted from her feet the ruffianly trio found other work to do.

(To be Continued.)



[A WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENT.]

SHE SHINES ME DOWN.

(BY ANNIE THOMAS.)

CHAPTER XXXV.

Alas! for human happiness
Alas! for human sorrow!
Our yesterday is nothingness;
What else will be our morrow?

"I THINK you would have made an effort and have gone with me last night, Clement, if you'd had any idea of how gloriously Gasker was going to sing," Mrs. Dumorest says to her husband next morning, when she and Arch lounge into Dumorest's studio for that privileged half hour of idleness and gossip before the two o'clock luncheon.

"Dear Gasker! and did he sing gloriously?" Dumorest asks, carelessly.

Then he adds:

"What an unexpected surprise it must have been to everybody who was there to hear him!"

"I wish you wouldn't disparage him," Mrs. Dumorest says. "You say just this sort of thing before Gwendoline, and even if she were inclined to reciprocate his regard for her you would make her hesitate—"

"What in the world are you driving at?" Clement interrupts, good-humouredly. "You have always ordered me to say anything I could think of to put Gasker 'out of Gwendoline's head,' as you phrased it. Not that I ever thought he was in her head, any more than in her heart."

"He might take a good place in any girl's head and heart," Mrs. Dumorest says, inconsequently. "I begin to think that Gwendoline is wrong in—in repelling him as she does."

"It didn't strike me that there was anything repellant in Miss Jones's demeanour to the

admirable Crichton," Arch says, with a laugh that is meant to conceal any slight chagrin he may feel at another man being aggressively put over his head.

"Didn't it really, Arch? Well, you see you're not interested in her, or watchful of her as I am."

Clement Dumorest whistles.

He makes no comment, but whistles, and Arch begins to feel uncomfortable.

If he cannot trust his sister to speak fairly, and to deal in an above-board manner with him, whom on earth can he trust?

Yet evidently there is something now behind the scenes, and he is denied free entrance.

"The prize ought to be well worth winning, indeed if Gasker is subjected to the nuisance of having his chances of success canvassed by all his admiring friends as freely as you do it, Florence," Arch remarks.

And Mrs. Dumorest replies:

"Too many men wish him to fail, and too many men wish her to reject the prize, for his 'chances of success' to be spoken about. But I believe that his love for her would make him worthy of her in time, and it is better for a woman to marry the man who loves her than the man she loves."

It is inopportune—hideously inopportune—Mrs. Dumorest thinks, that almost immediately after her enunciation of this sentiment Gwendoline herself should come in full of pleased excitement about "Mr. Gasker's engagement to a young lady to whom he had been attached for a long time, but whose religion (she being a Roman Catholic) had been made a barrier between them by her guardian."

"But she came of age two days ago," Gwendoline goes on, with unfeigned satisfaction, "and doesn't it sound like a genuine love-tale? She wrote to him at once, and they settled it yesterday. He was telling me all about it last night."

Arch feels a weight lifted from his heart as Gwendoline speaks.

In the first place it is evident that the quiet girl cares nothing at all for Gasker.

In the second place it is equally clear that she is not in league with his sister to try and pique him (Arch) into a declaration of passion for her.

And in the third place he is conscious that her mere presence gives him such pleasure as he has never hoped to experience since that dark day dawned on which he realised that he had lost Gladys.

On the whole, though, Mrs. Dumorest cannot quite get over the chagrin she feels at what she considers the untimely announcement of Gasker's love for and engagement to another girl.

It is a very happy quartette that presently sits down to luncheon, and the really devoted sister feels that in spite of everything her brother is at last on the road to the discovery that there is balm in Gilead still.

"Arch has come to his senses! Arch is alive at last to the fact that he may bring an inestimable blessing into his life if only he chooses to ask for it," Mrs. Dumorest says to her husband a few days after that little before-luncheon scene which has just been described.

"Is he going to be sensible and work that marble quarry I discovered for him last year?" Clement asks with some interest; "there's an inestimable blessing in the shape of a big fortune there if he only goes the right way to work about it."

"No," Mrs. Dumorest says, contemptuously; "working that marble quarry would spoil one of the most wildly picturesque bits of the Grey Friars grounds! How can you want him to do it? What I mean is that he has found out that it will make him very happy to have Gwendoline for his wife; he hasn't the wild, devoted, fanatical love for her that he had for Gladys, but it's a steadier flame, and will burn brightly all their lives, I fancy."

"She's a nice girl, but she can't hold a candle to Gladys as far as fascinating a fellow goes," Clement rejoins. "Poor Gladys! I can't help feeling sorry that she's forgotten so soon. I

feel it much more than if she had been a better woman."

"I earnestly hope that this 'better woman' will make him entirely forget Gladys," Mrs. Dumorest interrupts. "Why, Clement, Gladys was a fever to Arch, and if she had lived to be the mother of the heir she would have been a blister to all that part of the county, whereas with Gwendoline for his wife, he will take the place that a Saltoun ought to hold in the county again, and never be fettered by the fear that his wife will do anything outrageous, or that can in the slightest degree call forth any remark or reprehension."

"Rather monotonous on the whole after the chameleon-like Gladys," Clement laughs. "I like Gwendoline Jones, she's a pet-pupil of mine, and I am proud of her, and think her a promising artist, and an excellent girl, but she hasn't it in her to keep a fellow on the qui vive as Gladys did?"

"Perhaps you wouldn't admire that special power quite so warmly if your own wife exhibited it freely," Mrs. Dumorest replies; "however, I am not going to be tantalised by you into anything approaching distrust or dissatisfaction with this marriage, which I quite regard as one of my own making, and as I know my brother rather better than you do I am sure my prognostications for his future are more likely to be fulfilled than yours."

"All right, I'm ready enough to wish Arch God-speed in his wooing," Clement says; "though a good artist will be spoiled if he is successful; women who write or paint kick all their chances of a career overboard when they marry, in nine cases out of ten; the control of a husband and the cares of children and a household are too engrossing for real art feeling to flourish in the same atmosphere. Gwendoline will develop into a portly, prosperous, happy Mrs. Saltoun, but she will never be a great artist, or, indeed, make any more name than she has made already."

"But she will be safe and well cared for, and she'll make Arch happier than he has ever been before: I don't regret her spoilt career, I only rejoice that there is a prospect of comfort before him again: Gladys was such an eminently uncomfortable woman with her stormy ways and her unfathomable mysteries and uncertain temper."

So his sister quietly settles it all for Arch and Gwendoline long before the latter can be brought to see the beauty and propriety of the course that Arch proposes to her. At least, she is fully alive to the beauty, but has grave doubts as to the propriety of it.

"You could not be happy with a woman who thought more of a poor picture she was painting than of the splendid home and position you had put her in, Mr. Saltoun; and that would be the case with me. I have loved my life up here too well to give it up even for—"

She pauses, and the blush on her face tells him what the word she has left unuttered is.

"Even for me!" you were going to say; "that tells me a more flattering truth than I had expected to hear from you at first; the fact is you have loved your art-life because you have known it well and long; I'll venture to be its rival in your affections without any hesitation, a generous rival, too, Gwendoline, for you shall live it as thoroughly as you like down at Friars Court."

The girl smiles.

"That would be a mere luxurious pretence, Mr. Saltoun, after the reality and anxiety and earnestness of the genuine thing; besides, I have a number of young brothers and sisters to think of and help. My father is a very poor man, and situated as I am now I can lift a little of the burden that is laid upon him from off his shoulders; it is the greatest pleasure and happiness of my life to be able to do so. I wrong no one by helping them now; I am under no obligation to anyone, and their feelings are not hurt by the knowledge that they are the recipients of bounty; it would be different if I gave them my husband's money."

"Whatever money you desired to spend in any way would be essentially your own," he

says, blithely, feeling that if this is her most potent argument against his suit he will very soon overcome it.

Then he goes on to tell her of how she may do a more noble work than she has ever dreamt of doing, if she will only give herself to the task of re-uniting the broken interests of his shattered life, and of restoring him to a sense of his duty to himself and to those among whom he is placed.

Need it be said that as her heart goes with him in his pleading Gwendoline listens to and eventually is won by it.

Through it all he never mentions Gladys by name, or even as his wife. He merely says:

"I loved a woman wildly once, and failed at the fate which left me my life when she was taken from me by a power against which no man can cope; my love for you is of a different sort, less wildly unreasoning and passionate, but it will be lasting."

The wooing is not very warm, sensible wooing rarely is, but such as it is it wins Gwendoline, who is essentially sensible, and who has thought so much more of art all her grown-up life than of love, that this specimen of the sentiment as exhibited by Arch quite contents her.

She consents to being happy, in a grateful, womanly, pleasant, but sentimentally undemonstrative way, and as she is free from all jealousy concerning her predecessor—the woman whom Arch acknowledges he "loved wildly"—so she is devoid of all enmity about her.

All she hears of Arch Saltoun's first wife is from Mrs. Dumorest, and it is comprised in these few words:

"The first Mrs. Saltoun was never a favourite of mine, Gwendoline, and so I might, if we talked about her, be tempted to say more than I ought, and to speak unkindly about the dead."

"We'll agree not to discuss her," Gwendoline says, indifferently.

"And, if I were you I wouldn't say a word about her to Arch," Mrs. Dumorest goes on; "she blighted his life for months, and I only hope her very memory will pass away from him."

"You're transgressing the rule you yourself laid down about talking of her," Gwendoline reminds her friend.

Then they go on to the safer and more congenial topic of the trousseau, which is to be ordered and arranged by Mrs. Dumorest, subject to some artistic restrictions insisted upon by Gwendoline.

This second bride of Arch Saltoun's goes to him in very quiet state, but in truly orthodox fashion.

The marriage takes place at a little ivy-covered church in the Wiltshire parish of which her father is rector, and the wedding breakfast is laid in the long, low dining-room of the rectory.

They are a large party who sit down to it, but they are all brothers and sisters, the Dumorests are the only guests, and the merriment is hearty and the happiness great, but decorously subdued withal.

The grey-haired father and mother are naturally happy in the happiness of their child, and the brothers and sisters are joyful over it.

Still in the midst of all this there seems a cloud, scarcely this, but a shadow, over the whole family.

"I know the whole family now," Arch says, when he is taking his bride away, and saying farewell to his new relations; "as soon as we come back, you must all come up and pay us a long visit at Friars Court. You shall see for yourselves that Gwendoline's aspirations about making herself famous by her brush have received no check from me. I'll have a studio built for her if there's no room in the house that suits, so if she is idle you will blame her, not me, won't you?"

The father—the old man to whom Arch is cordially addressing these words—seems to take but little heed of the latter part of his new son-in-law's sentence.

He bids Heaven bless the husband of his

daughter's choice, says he feels that his child will be a happy and a good woman, and then with a quiver in his voice that is painfully suggestive of hardly-repressed tears, he adds:

"You know all the family but one, and she is lost to us," and Arch forbears to ask; "How or why?"

Once more Hamilton exerts itself to do fitting honour to its squire and his bride.

Once more roses red and roses white turn themselves into arches of sweetness for the happy pair to pass under.

Once more the neighbourhood flocks to do homage and honour to the new lady of Friars Court, and once more the souls of the demoiselles Finlay, Claxson, and Letchford are severely exercised.

With their maidenly charms expanding daily into more fully matured beauty at his gates, he has again had the bad taste to go out and choose a stranger!

True to his determination to bury the past, begin life afresh with his new wife, and suffer ignorance to be indeed ignorance, Arch Saltoun offers no opposition to the zealous and flattering resolution Lady Ellerdale shows to get on intimate terms with Gwendoline.

He feels that Gwendoline has discrimination, discretion and power enough to make her own selections and hold them, and so he does not seek to limit her.

Envy, hatred, and malice fail to find anything against her.

True artist and true woman, she is independent of all unpleasant, external influence through the might of self-isolation from them which is one of the greatest blessings wrested from life by art-loving and art-taught natures. At the same time as woman she shows her dependence on her fellow creatures by giving them her sympathy and seeking for theirs, and through her agency the story of their lives at Friars Court tells itself day by day with easy rhythm and graceful honest force.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Now he must deem grateful
The one who holds his heart;
And he must hold as hateful
His love with bitter smart.

"You had better make some small temporary sacrifices—for instance, deny yourself half a dozen of Worth's hundred guinea dresses in the course of the year, and refrain from buying every eye-catching piece of jewellery you see in the course of the season, than have eventually to make the large one of giving up your rank, reputation, and wealth. I have been patient, for I have actually been in want of money to supply my small daily wants, at the same time that I have seen you indulging in every kind of luxury and extravagance. The time has now come when there must be an end to my forbearance and your selfishness. I hear that Lord Ellerdale has a fine character for liberality; doubtless his beautiful wife benefits largely by the quality. If I have not made myself clear to you I will visit the neighbourhood of Dalesmeet in a few days, and give you a verbal explanation of my meaning, and a lucid statement of my requirements."

This letter, in the well-known handwriting of Mr. Cadogan, comes like a thunder-clap into the bright, sunny, summery life Lady Ellerdale is leading.

She is in this direfully difficult position—viz., that it will be almost as dangerous for her to attend to it as to disregard it, and to disregard it means her certain downfall.

The man must have money, and it must be sent to the address given, or he will be down, to the destruction of her peace and the ruin of her rank and reputation.

But how—how in the name of all that is impossible or miraculous—is she to raise such a sum as will satisfy this comorant's greed for gold without arousing the curiosity, not to say the suspicions, of Lord Ellerdale?

Daring as she is by nature and training, brilliantly happy as she always seems to be,

Lady Ellerdale is in reality very much in awe of the apparently jovial, easy-tempered, careless gentleman whom she has beguiled into marrying her.

There have never been any open quarrels between them.

No high words have been uttered by one to the other to the best of the servants' knowledge, and, to do the servants justice, they have been unremitting in the care and attention they have bestowed on the affairs of their master and mistress.

He has never in so many words told her that his heart recoils from her, and his head distrusts her.

She has never explained to him that she is fully alive to this phase of feeling on his part, and is indifferent about it so long as he will keep the peace towards her.

Yet for all this prudent reticence on their respective parts each knows that the bond between them is such a weak and hollow one that the slightest strain or smallest blow will crack it, leaving her unattached, to drift—whither?

"Better I had kept to the stage and left Ellerdale alone," she thinks, as she carefully destroys every trace of the threatening, damaging letter. "I could defy this beast, this coward, then when he tried to extort money from me, for if he had told his story then all the world would have sided with and pitied Miss Gascoigne, the hard-working, popular actress. But I am a countess now, and the world would see me pulled down with pleasure, and, for the matter of that, so will the noble earl, my husband. But they never shall have the pleasure," she cries, with sudden energy. "Other women have lost their jewels! Why shouldn't mine be stolen, even from well-guarded Dalesmeat?"

She does not come to this resolution without a pang, for the jewels are dearer to her heart than anything else that has ever had a place in it, and hers are of the most magnificent description.

All are carefully catalogued and fully described on vellum leaves, which are themselves bound in a cover of much worth and magnificence, enriched with precious stones.

She has long ago got rid of all the minor and less valuable ornaments which belonged to her Gascoigne days at the urgent request of Mr. Cadogan.

Each individual jewel and gem that is left is a possession the fashion and worth of which is fully recorded in the family jewel-book.

One of these can no more slip from its place in the special casket to which it is consigned than one of the family acres can hope to vanish without comment.

Lady Ellerdale is fully alive to these facts.

Nevertheless, it is to these jewels she looks for deliverance from that monstrous combination of avarice, cowardice, and cruelty whom she has come to regard as the evil genius of her life.

The servants at Dalesmeat are all exemplary. The majority of them have been born on the estate, and trained in wholesome fear of Lord Ellerdale.

They are honest, virtuous, discreet, and sober; for the punishment which falls upon those who are found out to be neither of these things is the heaviest that can be brought to bear upon them by means of Lord Ellerdale's influence.

Lady Ellerdale fully realises at once that she would look in vain for aid or help to any member of this household.

She is left to her own devices; and she has but a few hours in which to arrange and develop.

It is her daily habit to be sumptuously arranged for dinner, even on those occasions on which they are alone.

But this evening they have a dinner-party of twenty, and some extra display in the matter of jewellery is not only justifiable, but appears to be absolutely called for.

Diamonds and emeralds go well with the white brocaded satin dress and tightly fitting white velvet corsage body.

Sprays of emeralds with diamond flowers between adorn her golden hair.

A broad collar of diamonds, fastened by four emeralds, forming that "four-leaved shamrock" for which the sanguine have so long searched the realms of nature in vain, clasp her white, straight throat.

She wears a shield-shaped stomacher of diamonds and emeralds, and her round, white arms glitter with bands and snakes and coils, all of the same precious stones.

The buttons of her dress are emeralds set in diamonds.

The buckles of her shoes are worth a hundred pounds a piece.

Her coronet and monogram are in diamonds and emeralds on her fan.

She looks like an off-shoot from the Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, and as her husband looks at her, he cannot help seeing that she is a glorious field for the display of his family jewels.

Her two maids have enjoyed the task of dressing her to-night, and she has seemed to rejoice in their pleasure.

They are well-trained young women, who hailing from the Dalesmeat lands originally, have had the advantage of living as head maids to two or three noble ladies before they took service with the wife of their liege lord.

She is in the habit of talking to them freely of effects, and contrasts and harmonies, and combinations in toilet matters.

To-day she talks to them more freely than usual, but the talk is more about the intrinsic value of the precious stones than of their beauty.

It is a grand old casket of wrought Milan steel from which the diamonds and emeralds are taken this night.

Other suites are there; almost equally as precious, and some, indeed, of even greater grace and artistic worth.

There are rows upon rows of pearls, a set of opals, another of intaglios.

There they are, drawer upon drawer full of them, reposing upon their velvet-lined bed in their faultless beauty.

When the women have satiated their eyes Lady Ellerdale suddenly remembers that she is a "little late," turns the key hurriedly, gives it to Herbert, the elder and slightly more responsible maid who has charge of the jewellery, and sweeps down glitteringly to greet her guests.

She has the fine art, in several small pots and bottles in her dressing-case, of never looking well when she desires to look ill, or ill when it accords with her purpose to be roseate-hued, bright-eyed, in perfect health altogether.

This day her face, which underneath several layers of creamy wash, and number two pale pink powder, is lined, haggard, and sallow, is blooming with the softest rose tints, creaseless in its satin-skinned, youthful, healthy beauty.

Her eyes are a triumph of art over nature, for previous to the dressing operations, they were red-lidded, swollen, and bloodshot, from the effects of tears, anger, and fear.

They now beam softly, though brightly, through the long, carefully coloured lashes, above the deftly darkened under-lids.

The woman looks the embodiment of peace of mind, prosperity, beauty, and happiness.

She has never been more witty and charming, is the verdict of the men guests, and the women find her so sympathetic and desirous of pleasing them when they are alone in the drawing-room that time flies.

She gives them a specimen of her powers of imitation that is delightfully amusing to them all, as they fail to remember at the time that she "takes them off" with equal force and fidelity when they are absent.

It comes about presently (after they are joined by the men) in the most natural way possible, that she shall "dress up" and give them some character sketches after the manner of Mrs. Howard Paul.

She retires to her room for this purpose; the simple, unaffected creature, with her old habits of self-help strong upon her still, though she is a countess, does not require the assistance of her maid.

But after about ten minutes have elapsed her bell peals loudly and continuously.

Her attendants hasten to her, and find her almost too distracted to explain the cause of her excitement and alarm.

Lord Ellerdale is summoned, and the startling fact is elicited that during her absence at dinner her jewel casket has been opened and rifled of its contents; and she has made the appalling discovery when just about to summon Herbert for the key in order that she might replace her diamonds.

There is no doubt about it. The steel box is wide open, and the pearls and opals are gone!

The waiting-women go down on their knees and implore that they and their rooms may be subjected to strict search immediately.

But for some reason or other Lord Ellerdale seems to think that it will be a waste of a detective's time to do this.

The dressing-room window is open, and the thief—"the cruel, heartless thief must have climbed up by the strong branches of the wisteria and other creepers that cover the house," is Lady Ellerdale's tearful sobbing explanation of the manner in which the robbery which so closely concerns and evidently keenly affects her, has been effected.

A thousand conjectures are made by the guests! A thousand schemes for the ultimate detection of the abandoned wretch who has taken the Ellerdale family jewels, are propounded.

Lady Ellerdale listens gratefully to them, and almost hysterically promises that every single scheme shall be carried out, however glaringly they may clash with and nullify one another.

Lord Ellerdale appears to be several shades less grateful for the friendly suggestions, and is almost grimly determined not to take a single step that has been recommended.

The Ellerdale jewel robbery occupies columns of the daily papers for some time to come. The house is searched, the country round scoured. But never a pearl or opal that can be identified is discovered.

Through it all no one is so keen as her ladyship in urging on the endeavours that are being made to track down the thief or thieves.

She is anxious to get up to town in order that she may herself visit several of the first pawn-brokers' establishments in the hope of recovering her lost jewels.

But her husband represses this anxiety, telling her that it "is unbecoming in her position to show so much personal interest in the matter." He adds that he has a conviction that if he only is patient, time will elucidate the mystery, and meanwhile the thief or thieves, whosoever they may be, cannot be very much the better for their ill-gotten gains, as fear will have restrained them from selling such remarkable and now well-known pearls and opals.

It is singular, considering how deeply she laments them, that Lady Ellerdale does not betray more pleasure than she does at the prospect, remote as it is, of having her lost treasures restored to her.

On the contrary, from the moment Lord Ellerdale takes this line of attempting to assuage her grief and comfort her, she shows more anger than sorrow, and develops an amount of peevish irritability which renders her a pestilential nuisance to all such as are compelled to dwell in the tents with her.

Among other changes that come over her demeanour is this mighty one, she no longer makes a feint of feeling affection for her husband, but observes towards him a sulky reserve that is strangely at variance with the passionate pleasure she professed to take at one time in his presence, and the unceasing efforts she made to please and amuse him in the early days of their marriage.

After a while she takes to pining herself ill, and declaring that the Dalesmeat air is depressing her spirits and ruining her health. She declines either to go out or to receive company at home, and spends her time chiefly in the seclusion of her own suite of rooms.

And still Lord Ellerdale, though he is properly polite to her, and decorously sorry for her suffering, does not attempt to alleviate the latter

by allowing her to leave the air which she finds so injurious to her constitution.

At last she declares to herself that she can bear it—whatever it may be—no longer, and after a stormy debate with Lord Ellerdale, insists upon his taking her to London, where she can consult a celebrated physician on some derangement in her health which she avers is giving her great uneasiness.

"And there are other reasons besides the regard you ought to have for your wife which make it advisable that I should be under proper medical treatment," she says, and though he does not believe in these "other reasons," he is not in a position to deny that they exist.

"Dent is a very clever fellow, and he's so close that you can have him at your beck and call," he says.

"Dent! Am I likely to entrust myself to the care of a country apothecary. If you have so little regard for your own dignity, and for the well-being of your possible heir, as to propose it I certainly have too much regard for both, to say nothing of my feelings about myself, to accede to it. I will not trifle with my life any longer; I go to town to-morrow."

"Very well, as you please," he says, quietly, and his unlooked for acquiescence frightens her.

The next morning she strives to disarm him of whatever feeling or anger he may be entertaining against her, by a show of interest in and affection for him, such as she has not manifested for many a long day.

"I shall leave the packing and selection of everything to Herbert, and devote these two or three hours to you," she says, coming to him in the library at an earlier hour than she is wont to leave her dressing-room. "Ellerdale, I do hope I shall come back with all my nervous fears about myself set at rest; I shall be so much happier, and will make you so much happier if they are."

"Pray don't distress yourself about me, Geraldine; is that the dress you're going to travel in?"

"Yes, don't you like it?"

"After the nearly straight lines and want of fulness to which you have educated my eye lately, I confess I think this too fussy, too bunched altogether."

"If you don't like it I'll go and take off the 'improver' that makes it too bouffant to please you," she says, keeping her face and voice steady by an effort that taxes her nerves terribly.

But these latter threaten to give way altogether when he answers:

"As the time of your being with me is so short, I'll come up to your dressing-room with you," and he rises and follows her, for there is no appeal.

Go she must, do his bidding she must! She needs all her strength, and all the acting power of which she is mistress now.

They reach her dressing-room, and he orders her women out of it.

"Now, Geraldine," he says, "take off that abominable invention which spoils the lines of your lovely figure!"

"When you leave the room I will take it off," she says, trembling.

"No, I have a certain sort of curiosity to see the monstrosity by means of which you women think you 'improve' your figures."

She unties it, and as it is slipping heavily to the ground she seizes it, and is about to lock it up in a wardrobe when he takes it from her.

"Its weight is sufficient to make you ill," he says, proceeding calmly to cut it open; "at least I will relieve you of some of the 'stuffing' before I return it to you."

When after a few minutes he does return it to her she is quite cowed and subdued, and listens to his words in silence.

"I think, Lady Ellerdale," he says, "that you will experience sufficient from the removal of that heavy stuffing to make your proposed journey to town unnecessary."

The next day the London morning papers have it that the Ellerdale jewels are found!

(To be Continued.)

CRIMINAL LAW REFORM.

THE Bill introduced by the Attorney-General for the purpose of reforming our criminal law and procedure is a measure of great magnitude and importance. The proposed code is confined to indictable offences, and is to contain a statement of the persons who are to be regarded as parties to the commission of such offences; of the circumstances which form excuses or justifications for the commission of acts which would otherwise constitute crimes; a minute and careful definition of the various indictable offences known to our law, or at all events, of such of them as are ordinarily considered to fall within the category of crimes; a statement of the punishments which may be inflicted upon those who commit such offences; and a complete code of procedure. The alterations proposed to be made in the law are these:

To abolish the distinction between felonies and misdemeanours; those who incite to the commission of crimes and those who commit them are to be put on the same footing, and be called by the same "ugly name;" there is to be a diminution of maximum punishments—the nature of the crime and the circumstances of its commission are to affect the quantum of punishment which can be awarded; all mention of malice is to be omitted from definitions of offences; constructive murders are abolished, and that man is alone to be adjudged to death who does acts which cause death, being utterly indifferent to results.

Provocation is defined as being the existence of circumstances depriving a man of his self-control. A woman killing her child at or immediately after birth may be found guilty of manslaughter only. But destroying the life which may exist in a child not fully born is made an offence punishable with penal servitude for life. Then, as to larceny—every species of determinate property, subject to certain necessary conditions, is declared to be subject to the law of larceny.

Considerable improvements are made in the law relating to forgery. The part of the code which deals with procedure provides for only one course of proceeding in all cases. All subtleties as to venue are got rid of. An accused who is indicted instead of being taken before a magistrate is to receive simple notice. The Court is to have power to change a place of trial as in a civil action, and to direct the proceedings to be carried out as if they were in a civil action.

Proceedings in error are made plain and simple, and an application for a new trial is to be allowed with certain conditions, and the Court of Appeal may, if it thinks fit, allow an appeal to the House of Lords. The last matter mentioned by the Attorney-General is the simplification of criminal pleading. The Bill makes a "clean sweep" of all the old technicality—for verbosity it gives terseness, and for darkness, light.

Bearing in mind our recent experiences, we ought to be grateful to the Government for causing such a code to be prepared, and to the Attorney-General for introducing it with so much force and clearness to the House.—"Law Times."

WHEN Sir Warwick Hele Tonkin died at Teignmouth, a few years ago, he bequeathed to his daughter a ring which was said to have been given by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. The history of the ring is most curious, if true. According to tradition, it was taken from Jerusalem by Titus, and brought to Rome, where it fell into the hands of the Popes. Clement VIII. gave it to Wolsey, from whom it passed to the monks of the Abbey of Leicester, and from them into private hands at the dissolution of the monasteries, under Henry VIII.

THE INVISIBLE COMMODORE;

OR

THE SECRETS OF THE MILL.

CHAPTER XIII.

As late as was the hour, Essie Morrow was afoot, pacing restlessly to and fro in the library of the Government House. Her face was pale and agitated; her anxiety and mental disturbance greater than she had ever before known; she was too clear-headed not to have judged by the dangers of the past that there were possible perils in her future.

In a word, she was in the state of mental depression that would have naturally been expected of her, in view of all the circumstances and surroundings in which she was placed.

At one side of the room sat her old nurse, Mrs. Craddock, a motherly Scotchwoman, who had again and again vainly essayed to prevail upon her young mistress to retire, and who was now a picture of solicitous yearning and gloomy apprehension.

"No, Mrs. Craddock, do not ask me to go to bed yet," said Essie, in a voice of intense feeling, at another request to this effect. "How could I sleep with such a flood of anxieties pressing upon me? I want to see Major Clyde again, and be assured by him that he has made no new discoveries of villainy, and that we may close our eyes, Mrs. Craddock, with a reasonable certainty of living to open them in the morning."

"Well, well, Miss Essie, I will not insist further," said Mrs. Craddock, who looked even more anxious than her mistress. "Heaven knows we have fallen into evil days! I cannot help thinking of the long and lonely voyage before your poor father. He will certainly have to be lucky not to fall into the hands of the pirates."

"Excuse me, Miss Essie, if I pain you, but after what has happened here I should not be astonished if the very earth should open beneath me. Where are the honest men? Has everybody turned pirate? Were it not for my faith in Major Clyde, I should really ask you to fly with me to some other island."

"You have faith in the major, then?" asked Essie, quickly. "Is he not grand and brave not and noble?"

"And to think what a miserable impostor has so long been occupying his place," exclaimed the old nurse, in garrulous wonderment. "Was ever anything so strange and extraordinary? If I had known what sort of a brazen wolf we were cherishing, I shouldn't have dared to draw a long breath. Thank Heaven! he's under a stout lock and key, and behind stout prison walls and bars, or I should be crazy, distracted. Do you suppose there are any more of his kind wandering loose around the island, Miss Essie, or pretending to be respectable people?"

"Heaven only knows, Mrs. Craddock," answered Essie, "but the major thinks there are plenty of pirates masquerading around us, although he assures me that I need be under no apprehension from them."

"How easily you utter those words, 'the major,' Miss Essie!" ejaculated the old nurse. "You like him."

This sudden evidence of Mrs. Craddock's keen perceptions brought a rosy tinge to the lovely girl's features.

"Would it be strange if I did like him?" she questioned, archly.

"To the contrary, it would be perfectly natural," assured Mrs. Craddock, vivaciously. "I expect you to like him. Are you not in his keeping? Is he not in every way worthy of your best regards? But is it not time for him to put in an appearance?"

"I expect him every moment."

"To be sure, it is quite a task to make the

'grand rounds' of the island," suggested Mrs. Craddock. "I suppose he has visited all the batteries and fortifications. His object was to assure himself that the pirates were in the minority, and that we need be under no apprehension from them. But—I wish he were here! I feel nervous with all these cares and troubles. True, there is a sentinel at every door, and the evening has passed off without the least incident calculated to alarm us, but I shall be glad to see Major Clyde again with us. And here he comes!"

She started abruptly to her feet, advancing towards the door, as heavy footsteps resounded in the reception-room.

"Yes, at last!" murmured Essie, as a vivid glow overspread her features. "What a relief to us!"

She promptly placed herself in advance of the old nurse, just within the door, a radiant picture of welcome, her face beaming with the emotions Harry Clyde had already awakened.

The door suddenly opened, and a figure appeared on the threshold—the figure of a tall and formidable man—a figure quite unlike the one expected—in a word, the figure of the false major—the impostor!

He came in smiling—insolently happy.

A lighted cigar was between his fingers; his sword at his side; his pistols in his belt; his limbs perfectly free; his dress faultless. In a word, he was more at his ease than usual—more himself—more sinister and terrible!

Essie recoiled in an amazement too great for expression until she reached a chair from which she had lately arisen, and then she dropped, nearly insensible, into the seat thus afforded, while Mrs. Craddock stood aghast and motionless.

"Ah, quite a surprise, I see!" exclaimed the impostor, jauntily, as he advanced into the apartment. "You were not looking for me, it seems, but for another."

"You here?" cried Essie, recovering herself. "I thought you in prison!"

"I have indeed been there—just for a change," admitted the impostor. "Let's see, it has been about twenty-four hours since your father and his new friend gave me that little bit of experience, but the time has not passed heavily upon my hands; I've been very busy."

"You? busy?" Essie managed to articulate, waving off the intruder so earnestly that he came to a halt midway between her and her nurse.

"Yes, Miss Morrow—very busy indeed," avowed the impostor, more and more smilingly, as he dropped gracefully into the nearest chair, and drew it up in front of the terrified and anxious girl. "When a wise man finds a hole in his armour, he hastens to repair it, and this, in substance, is what I have been doing during the last twenty-four hours!"

"Oh, you villain! how dare you come here, with your cigars, and take a seat in the presence of a lady?" cried Mrs. Craddock, suddenly rushing at the impostor, flourishing an inverted chair. "My Scotch blood is up! I can't stand it!"

Strong and active, a model of bodily health and vigour, the excited old creature made such a determined attack upon the impostor that he found it no easy task to protect himself from her.

But her strength was soon exhausted before his quiet resistance, and then he wrested the chair from her, pushing her violently back into the seat from which she had arisen.

"Now don't be an idiot, old woman," enjoined the intruder, menacingly, as he bared his teeth in a savage smile. "If you come at me again I shall strew your grey hairs to the wind without the least ceremony."

The threat was powerless to prevent Mrs. Craddock from resorting to the measure next in order: she began screaming loudly for assistance.

"The guards must come to our assistance," she explained to her young mistress, pausing for breath. "This man must be secured again, and returned to his prison. Help! Murder!"

She bawled with a vigour and variety of which Essie had never deemed her capable.

Resuming his seat, the intruder puffed his cigar quietly until Mrs. Craddock had bawled herself hoarse, and was obliged to suspend operations from sheer exhaustion.

"Allow me to say, old woman," he then said, "that you are wasting your breath to very poor advantage. No one will pay any attention to you. The guards will not come. The guards now on duty here will take their orders only from me."

The remark was sufficiently sinister—well calculated, in fact, to set the two helpless women to thinking.

"Then we can at least take leave of you, and so rid ourselves of your presence," cried Mrs. Craddock, springing to her feet. "Come, my dear mistress."

"The thought is a good one," said Essie, arising. "Evidently this man has been set free by his fellow-plotters and conspirators. At any rate, we are not obliged to breathe the air polluted by his presence."

"No, no, my dear mistress. Come!"

Essie led the way towards the door opening into an interior apartment.

At a shrill whistle from the intruder, who did not offer to intercept the couple, the door in question was thrown open from within, and a hideous old negress appeared on the threshold, grinning as mockingly as malignantly.

This negress was the sinister creature, Quaddo's mother, who had had charge of the false major's retreat and lookout—the haunted mill on the eastern shore of the island—as we have seen in former chapters.

The mien of the negress, as she planted herself squarely in the doorway, was sufficiently expressive; no passage in that direction was possible except over her body.

"The other way," suggested Essie.

They turned their steps toward the remaining door of the apartment—that by which it communicated with the reception-room—hurrying in that direction, now thoroughly frightened.

Again the impostor uttered a brief signal, when the figure of Quaddo, the black dwarf, appeared in the doorway in question, in the attitude of a person intending to protect it from use of all hazards.

"You see, Miss Morrow?" suggested the intruder, smilingly. "There is no use of calling for help; no one will come to you! And you can also see that my good friends here are inclined to dispute your departure. You had better return to your seat."

The spirited girl turned an angry and defiant glance upon him.

"Are you indeed entirely master here?" she demanded.

"Entirely!"

The one word was enough to freeze her young blood, especially in view of the tone of voice and the manner in which it was accompanied.

"How could it be otherwise?" continued the impostor, complacently. "I not only have hosts of friends and co-workers, but they are all devoted to me. That black dwarf, for instance, would have released me within three minutes after I was brought bound and gagged into the reception-room, if I had not given him a hint by shaking my head to await my further pleasure. And as to Dame Beauty," he added, flashing a glance of confidence and esteem upon the old negress, "she would break your limb by limb if I were to give her an order to that effect."

The negress showed by her very air and attitude that this was no idle declaration.

"You see, therefore, that I am master here," finished the impostor, "and that I am the arbiter of your destiny."

It was now time for another manifestation from Mrs. Craddock. She burst into tears, uttering a volley of lamentations that were almost unintelligible from the violence of her despair.

The face of our heroine had become very pale and stern.

She could hardly preserve even an outward calmness as she took in the full force and bearing of all she was seeing and hearing.

"Having been so frank thus far, sir," she said, "perhaps you will answer another question or two. Is—is my father also at your mercy?"

"Perfectly so, I am glad to say," was the response, in the same quiet voice the intruder had all along used. "The 'Alliance' is now in the hands of my people, and your father and Captain Chuddley are prisoners!"

Essie could only stare at him in speechless consternation, appearing to have been turned to stone.

Even Mrs. Craddock stopped crying and chattering, realising from the words and mien of the enemy that something horrible had indeed happened.

"The fact should not surprise you, Miss Morrow," added the impostor. "I have been in full possession here for years. Is it any wonder that the late-comer of to-day should have failed to oust me or even to realise the extent of my resources? I am frank enough to tell you that nearly all the men on the 'Alliance' are my confederates. This is especially true of the party that pretended to have been shipwrecked, and so offered their services to Captain Chuddley. Those pretended unfortunates were my creatures, and their story was merely one of my invention."

His manner, as he said this, was even more impressive than his words.

The soul of Essie Morrow seemed frozen within her, as she looked into the vast and bottomless abyss thus opening at her feet.

"In Heaven's name, who and what are you?" she demanded, in a voice of agony and terror.

"Your admirer, your friend, if you will," he replied, smiling grimly. "In any case, the master of your destiny, Miss Morrow, and of the destinies of all persons in whom you have any interest!"

"All, sir? All?" gasped Essie.

"Absolutely all!"

At this assurance Essie clutched at her heart convulsively. It seemed as if it would burst with its mighty tide of apprehension and horror.

"In that case—it must be," she murmured—"something has happened to Major Clyde—to keep him so long away from me!"

"There has indeed! Behold!"

The door guarded by Quaddo opened again briskly, and several men hastily entered, bearing in their midst a bound and helpless figure.

A single glance sufficed for Essie.

The prisoner was Harry Clyde!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE same glance which told Essie of Harry Clyde's identity told her also that he had been engaged in a desperate battle.

He was still bleeding profusely from a number of wounds, and there was a heavy welt across his face and temple, caused by a blow which had rendered him unconscious, and so facilitated his capture.

"Oh, heavens!" gasped Essie.

She stood a moment as if petrified. Then she turned to Mrs. Craddock.

"Quick! some water!" she cried.

The old nurse complied with prompt alacrity, bringing a basin of water and a towel from Essie's room, notwithstanding the fact that "Dame Beauty," the old negress, was still standing at the door of the apartment, and surveying the exciting scene with a permanent grin of satisfaction.

And in another moment both Essie and the old nurse were cleansing the clotted blood from Harry's head and features, while the false major sat looking on with mocking complacency, and at the same time quietly smoking his cigar.

"It seems that we are in a terrible minority here, Miss Morrow," said Harry, looking his

thanks for the kind offices he was receiving. "The whole colony is a mere nest of pirates. The commander of the garrison is one of this man's tools, and so is the keeper of the prison, and indeed all the leading officials of the island. This masquerade has been going on for years. You will comprehend, therefore, how I have been betrayed and surprised at every step of the administration upon which I have entered. Traitors are all around us, and have been for years—traitors and pirates."

He paused pantingly, still weary from the effects of the fearful struggle which had resulted in his capture, but soon resumed:

"It was not until this night had fully set in, and, indeed, until your father and Captain Chuddley had taken leave of us, that I began to realise how rapidly the ground was slipping from under my feet. As soon as Governor Morrow had gone, in fact, there was no longer any occasion for the minions of this man to conceal their real character and sentiments. The keeper of the prison was even bold enough to endeavour to trap me, when I went there to look after the safety of our prisoner, and as I escaped from that trap I was set upon by a numerous band of pirates on my way back to the Government House, and for the last hour I have been in the keeping in which you find me. Tom Skerritt and the rest of our friends are in a similar predicament, and you will thus see at a glance that we are completely powerless to cope with these ruffians!"

"This man says that my father is in his hands," communicated Essie, with great agitation. "Is it so?"

"I cannot doubt it," returned Harry, after a glance at the jubilant and malignant countenance of the impostor. "I am told, too, that every man of honour and influence on the island has been warned to keep within his own doors under penalty of instant death. In a word, this man is master!"

The impostor had nodded a contented confirmation to all of these declarations.

"You see, Miss Morrow?" he questioned, in a voice sibilant with triumph. "The young man has, at least, the merit of perceiving just how the case stands, and does not seek to buoy you up with hopes that can only prove delusive and disastrous!"

He made a sweeping gesture to his men, and they at once seized Harry and removed him from the apartment as promptly as they had entered, despite all the efforts of Essie's voice and hand to detain him.

"Let him go," said the impostor, imperatively. "The truth is, another gentleman will soon claim your attention—your own father. You may expect to rejoin him from one moment to another!"

At this unexpected assurance Essie could only stare wonderingly at her oppressor.

"You are surprised, I see," said the impostor, "but a few words of explanation will make everything plain to you. To begin with, you will recall that I am the possessor of the 'haunted mill' on the eastern shore? That 'haunted mill' has long been my watch-tower—my lookout. Dame Beauty, who has had charge of the premises, is entirely devoted to me; as is Quaddo, her son. It is from that commanding point that I have for years kept watch and ward over all the business of the colony—over all the coming and going of ships—and especially over all the measures Governor Morrow has been pleased to take for the extinction of the pirates!"

This frank avowal only deepened Essie's horror and apprehension of the speaker. She saw that he had cast all reserve to the winds, and that he now deemed himself able to bid the whole world defiance!

"You may wonder that I am so well informed of your father's new misfortune," resumed the remorseless villain, "but a few words will explain the matter to your entire comprehension. I have for more than two years been in constant communications with my friends by means of carrier-pigeons!"

Both Essie and Mrs. Craddock were unable to repress exclamations of comprehension.

"Ah! I know now the meaning of those birds!" cried the old nurse.

"But where are the friends to which you refer, and with whom you have thus communicated?" asked Essie.

The face of the impostor flamed jubilantly. His voice became still shriller with a joyous and malignant excitement.

"Go ask the winds, or the waves," he answered. "My friends are as many as the sands on the shore! They have kept me informed from day to day of all that was transpiring in my peculiar dominions," and he smiled sardonically. "And I, on the other hand, have sent my orders daily, by means of these pigeons, which you supposed I was cherishing as a mere fancy. Yes! the news has come to me literally upon the wind, from a distance sometimes amounting to hundreds of miles, and I have in like manner sent my orders to my executives in the same rapid and infallible fashion. Ah!"

His closing ejaculation was addressed to Quaddo, who hastily entered and advanced to his master's side, bringing in his hands one of the birds under discussion.

"Him just come, master," announced the dwarf.

The impostor looked under one of the bird's wings, producing a tiny slip of paper, which he read and passed to Essie.

"You see?" he muttered. "The 'Alliance' has been joined by two of the vessels of my friends, and all three ships are now lying off the south shore, awaiting my orders!"

This was indeed the purport of the message. Essie became terribly pale as she read it.

"It's only too true, then?" she murmured. "The 'Alliance' has been seized, as you asserted, and my father is at your mercy!"

"Perfectly! And this brings us to the real business of this interview," said the impostor. "You realise that my word is law here—that I alone am running the colony at this moment, and that I alone am the sole arbiter of your fate and of the destinies of all persons around you, including your father and the major. You comprehend this?"

Essie nodded dumbly, a prey to the accumulated horrors of the situation.

"If this fact has been duly realised, it will be easy for you to comprehend the generosity of the proposal that I am about to make to you."

The word proposal from the lips of her tormentor gave Essie a shock that could not readily have been surpassed by a galvanic battery, and she interrupted him with a sudden gesture of desperation and disgust.

"Any proposition you can make, sir," she said, haughtily, "would be to me a dastardly insult, in view of the position in which you have placed me. Am I not helpless? Am I not being virtually assassinated through my father? Have you not brought all your resources into play to annihilate me? And now what possible use can there be in making proposals of any kind to me? Am I a free agent that I can accept or reject them? Is there likely to be any bond of union between us?"

"There certainly will be," assured the impostor, with increasing sternness, as his teeth became visible in a hideous smile of anticipated triumph. "You are not only in my hands, Miss Morrow, at this moment, but you will remain in them henceforth and for ever. It is for you to decide whether we shall be friends or enemies. Your father being in my hands, his fate necessarily depends upon your actions towards me. If you will marry me—"

"Marry you?"

The girl made a gesture of horror and loathing that spoke volumes.

At sight of it the impostor became livid. "Enough!" he breathed hoarsely. "Enough for the present! I see that I am wasting my words. Quaddo!"

He turned abruptly to his minion.

"Quaddo," he pursued, "you will take this young lady and her old nurse to one of the ships off the south coast. Dame Beauty will go with you, and Sergeant Buckland has already

received orders to furnish you the necessary escort."

"Yes, master."

It was clear that the dwarf had a full comprehension of his duties.

The impostor turned to Essie. "I allow you ten minutes," he said, "in which to make all your preparations for your final departure from these premises. I know you are sensible enough not to offer any resistance to my representatives; if you were to do so they would treat you with prompt severity. Go!"

"And Major Clyde?" cried Essie. "What are you going to do with him?"

The impostor smiled fiendishly.

"Give me one little promise of one word only," he said, "and I will turn Major Clyde loose on the instant, allowing him to go where he pleases. Only answer affirmatively the one little question I have so often asked."

The girl made another involuntary gesture of aversion, at sight of which the face of her enemy turned from its repulsive lividness to a ghastly whiteness.

"Since such is your mood, my fine lady," he muttered, "you need not trouble yourself about the fate or future of Major Clyde. You are not his keeper. Pack up at once, and be prepared to vanish. You will be allowed barely ten minutes for this purpose."

He turned away savagely, with a gesture to Quaddo, and strode from the apartment.

Just without, in the reception-room, and on the veranda of the Government House, three hundred armed men were awaiting orders.

"Silence, all!" enjoined the impostor, as he presented himself in the midst of these men, and rapped smartly with a ruler upon a corner of the official desk at which he had so often transacted business.

The busy buzz and chatter which had for several minutes been penetrating into the interior apartments was hushed as if by magic. Every ear became attentive; every eye glistened with eager hopes.

"The game is played, men," announced the false major, in his sternest voice. "My long masquerade here is ended. I leave the island within the hour for ever. The 'Alliance' is in our hands, and, with two of our ships, is anchored off the south coast, awaiting our coming. You who have been so long masquerading here with me will, of course, accompany me in my departure. We must all vanish!"

He waited until a general murmur of assent and approval had subsided, and then added:

"But we shall not go empty-handed. We'll give the enemy another specimen of our power that will be long remembered. In a word, we will plunder the town, and leave it in ashes behind us!"

The roar of applause that followed would have done credit to an assemblage of fiends.

"Let no time be lost," added the impostor, when silence was again restored. "Your leaders all have their instructions—each in his own particular province. Every store is to be sacked—every man of wealth put to ransom—every object worth removing to be carried off to our ships. An hour must suffice for the execution of all these measures, and at the end of that time I will meet you all again at our vessels. Go, and be terrible!"

With noisy rejoicings, all these men rushed forth into the town, like ravening wolves into a fold of helpless victims.

Waiting until every man had left the apartment, the false major smiled grimly, and took his way down a long pair of stairs into the cellar of the official residence.

Here were several barrels, from one of which he lifted the head, when it was seen to be filled with powder.

Placing a fuse in position, the impostor applied his light to it.

"It is timed for half an hour," he muttered. "I must give the town a final salute as I take my departure. In just half an hour the Government House and everything in it will be blown to atoms."

Smiling still more darkly and grimly, he

ascended to the library. The closing work of his sway was already being accomplished. A brief fusillade was resounding in the surrounding grounds, and the false major comprehended that a few honest citizens of the island had rallied in the vicinity to dispute his purpose, but his countenance only hardened at these manifestations; he knew that all resistance would soon be at an end. Such, in fact, proved to be the case.

Afterwards there was a temporary lull in the sounds of distress and confusion, and then fires were seen blazing in the town, while the streets were filled with cries of anguish and horror. In a word, the creatures of the false major were doing their work!

A few minutes he listened to this uproar, with constantly increasing satisfaction, and then he knocked at the door of Essie's apartment.

"It is time to be off!" he cried.

A moment later Essie appeared, guarded by Quaddo and the old negress, and followed by Mrs. Craddock.

All were loaded with bundles, Essie having determined to make the best of her situation, and so charged herself with such of her father's papers and effects as she thought he would desire to save from the general destruction. The false major was surprised at the coolness of her bearing.

"You will not tell me what you have done with Major Clyde, I suppose?" she asked.

"Not under the circumstances—no," was the answer. "I will only say," and he smiled with grim satisfaction, "that Major Clyde is in safe keeping!"

He led the way to the entrance, passing out into the midst of a waiting escort.

"You see that I am making things hot for the good people of Barbadoes," he added, as Essie recoiled in amazement from the sight of flames around her, and from the wild cries of pillage and suffering, and sounds of violence that suddenly fell upon her notice. "We are stripping the land!"

Our heroine was simply stunned by this additional display of her tormentor's infamy and cruelty.

"And you had better take a last look at your surroundings, Miss Morrow," added the false major, in a whisper. "The Government House is mined with a dozen barrels of powder, and will soon take a sudden start heavenwards! Lively, now! It is dangerous to linger!"

Essie was dumb with a wondering horror. She was barely able, with all her bravery and self-possession, to walk in the direction in which she was guided.

"We shall soon be at the ships," said the impostor, jubilantly, "and as quickly embarked. A long adieu, my friends," and he glanced over his shoulder, "and better luck with your next deputy!"

And he laughed like a demon.

(To be Continued.)

MEN WHO WIN WOMEN.

THE Creator has so made the sexes that women, like children, cling to men, lean upon them as though they were superior in mind and body. They make them the suns of systems, and their children revolve around them. Men are gods, if they but knew it, and women burning incense at their shrines. Women, therefore, who have good minds and pure hearts want men to lean upon.

If a man would have a woman to do him homage, he must be manly in every sense; a true gentleman, not after the Chesterfield school, but polite because his heart is full of kindness to all; one who treats her with respect, even deference, because she is a woman; who never condescends to say silly things to her; who brings her up to his level, if his mind is above hers; who has no time to be frivolous with her.

Always dignified in speech and act; never yields to temptation, even if she puts it in his way; ambitious to make his mark in the world, whether she encourages him or not; who is never familiar with her to the extent of being an adopted brother or a cousin; who is not over careful about dress; always pleasant and considerate, but always keeping his place of the man, the head, and never losing it.

Such deportment, with noble principles, good mind, energy, and industry, will win any woman in the world worth winning.

THE CRISIS OF HER FATE.

A young king who had just come to his own was making the tour of his dominions. He ruled over a small German monarchy which we will call Nordland.

He came to the throne—well, about the time that our ancestors were engaged in the American war.

Little would he sympathise with those revolutionary republicans.

He believed in the divine right of kings, and his subjects were as loyal vassals as ever bowed the knee.

He was full of good resolutions and plans for the benefit of his people; it was in order to become more intimately acquainted with them that he had undertaken this journey. He wanted them to know him by sight. He wanted to be a father to his people.

He was received with popular rejoicings and acclamations and merry-makings of all descriptions.

The Nordlanders kept up a great many old-fashioned customs, and when they got up shows they were as elaborate as those we read of in the middle ages.

Truth to say, this simple people had scarcely emerged from the simplicity of manners of the middle ages; it was only natural that they should keep up the fine doings that had been handed down to them from father to son, almost exactly as they had been first inaugurated.

At one stage of the royal progress the inhabitants of a certain village arranged the most successful spectacle that had been seen along the route.

It was a harvest scene. All the products of the neighbourhood were displayed; and seated on heaps of apples, or on stacks of rye and oats, or on kegs of wine, were the prettiest girls to be found, dressed in the picturesque national costumes, but these made up in soft, expensive silken fabrics, and adorned with gold braid, and the precious stones to be found in the Nordland mines, making a rich and brilliant display.

The king was charmed.

"Was he a King of Fairyland?" he asked himself.

Presently the beautiful peasant-girls struck up a popular air.

The neighbouring hills gave back the echo of the glad, strong young voices.

The royal equipage halted meanwhile, and the king and his courtiers examined the lovely faces of the singers, with that masculine interest in feminine beauty which is shared alike by king and peasant.

One girl stood prominently out above the rest, remarkable for her extraordinary beauty. She was tall and fair and graceful.

She had the features and the proportions of one of the old Greek statues, only warmed to life, and rosy with animation and youth. She moreover led the singing. Her clear, sweet voice rang out above the rest.

The king signified his wish to speak to this young Venus. With easy unconsciousness she advanced from her sisters, and "her arms upon her breast she laid," as she stood before her young monarch.

"I address myself to you, as you appear to be the leader to the band who has given me so

much pleasure," the king said. "I thank you. In the days of old, the Fairest Fair received the prize of beauty. I adjudge that prize to you. Will you wear this ring as a reminder of this day?"

So saying, he drew a costly ring from his finger, a flashing solitaire diamond, and put it in her willing hand. She blushed, and her blue eyes shone; but she made a faint show of resistance.

"Your majesty has not seen all the Nordland women yet. You may see others more beautiful a great deal than I am, before you have completed your journey."

"I am willing to run the risk," the king said.

In his enthusiastic youth it made him very happy to bestow this prize.

But in his favourite character of father to his country he bethought him to add a moral maxim.

"My child, do not let this gift, a tribute to your beauty and your talent, turn your head. When you return to your companions, tell them that this gem is a mere trifle compared to others in the king's treasury, which are reserved for virtue and goodness."

The girl fixed her large blue eyes as though to question him, upon the young king, but there was a stir among the courtiers standing about the royal carriage.

She was given to understand that the audience was over. She fell back, tears in her eyes, tears of joy and gratitude. It was her first success.

Afterwards her life knew many such, but that was its sweetest. What is more, that day decided her destiny. The king's praise was her baptism into fame.

Count Eric Von Walden had been sent by the king to summon Christine to speak to him.

And when the girl, bowing low, retired, it was Count Eric who escorted her back to her companions.

An unnecessary piece of gallantry, perhaps, between a noble and a peasant; but Count Von Walden did not stop to weigh necessities. He wanted the beautiful Christine to say one word just to him, before they parted. And he so contrived that she did.

It would have been difficult for any woman to withstand the courtly grace of his manner, or to refrain from returning his smile of adieu. Nevertheless it was the king's smile, and not the count's, which haunted Christine longest.

That evening the villagers prolonged their festivities until a late hour. They assembled in a large room which was often used for purposes of entertainment.

They sang glees, roundels, ballads. Christine again was the chief singer. At the end of one of her songs she became aware that she had for her audience one of the courtly assemblage of the morning. The king had stopped over for the night at a town a few miles away.

Count Eric had posted back to see and hear the enchanting peasant maiden once more. He came forward with his simple noble grace, and said a word or two of cordial praise. He included all the singers, to be sure, but he dropped his voice, and there was an especial earnestness in his manner, as he added a few words of special approbation to Christine.

"You ought to study," he said to her. "You owe it to the world. Such a voice as you have belongs not only to yourself, but to the world."

"Study!" The girl laughed—and not an altogether pleasant laugh either. "It is as much as my father can do to buy bread to put into our mouths. There are five of us at home."

"Which is your father?"

"The tall peasant there, in the grey blouse: the one with iron-grey hair and black moustache—Conrad Vogelsang. He has more sense in his little finger than all the other men in the village have in all their bodies put together."

"You don't think much of all the other men in the village, then?"



[THE PRETTY PEASANT.]

"I have never seen a man to be compared to my father—that is—"

She blushed and glanced up at him; it seemed as though she fancied she had said something rude.

Count Von Walden laughed; he saw through her embarrassment.

"Never mind. I do not expect you to compare me with your father."

"Oh, a gentleman like you—" began Christine.

"I do not doubt he has as good a title to nobility in his own way."

"Oh, thank you. Yes, he is a peasant, and you—you are a prince?"

"No, I am a count. My name is Von Walden. I wish that I were an older acquaintance, because I would like to establish a claim upon you. I would like you to permit me to serve you. I will tell you frankly that this wish brought me all the way back here to-night."

"Serve me?"

"Yes: and in serving you to serve myself, and—the world."

"Oh!" She began to understand. Her eyes darkened and glowed. The colour grew hot in her cheeks. She clasped her hands. "You want to have me study—"

"Would you like it?"

"It is the one thing I long for."

He stood before her gravely, very gravely, his arms folded, looking down upon her. He had a charming, thoughtful, high-bred face—a face that much resembled that of the man in the pic-

ture of the Huguenot Lovers, excepting that Count Von Walden wore a long, heavy dark moustache. He was so simple and so gentle that even the peasant girl he was talking to was at her ease with him.

Nay, she stood before him like a princess, her round white arms folded, too, her blue eyes looking into his, her golden hair braided heavily down to her waist.

In truth, she might have been his countess, masquerading in the costly peasant garb she was dressed in on this festival occasion.

"But now?" she asked, slowly.

"I am going back to the capital to-morrow. I shall make it my business to see the Royal Musical Director, and to ask him whether he can give you employment. I am so sure that if he once hears you sing, he will wish to secure your services; that if he says there is an opening for you, either to sing in the King's Chapel, or at the series of concerts he directs every winter, I will send for you to come to the city. Will you come?"

"Oh, could I? There are father and the children—and the money. If it were only myself, I would walk all the way, gladly."

"I will send the money. You can pay me back when you earn money of your own. Will you promise me to come?"

"You must ask father. I will come if he agrees to it. Please, will you speak to father about it? It will sound too much like a fairy tale if I tell him. I am afraid he will not believe me."

So Count Von Walden crossed the room and addressed Peasant Vogelsang on the subject of his daughter's career.

The father eyed the young man doubtfully. He beheld a possible lover in him. He shook his head gravely.

"It would never do for Christine to go to the city alone. There are many temptations there for a young girl—and beautiful as she is."

"It will be worth your while to go with her. I fancy that work is scarce during the winter. Lock up your house, and make your home in the capital for a few months. I will see that you do not come to want."

"I have always been able to keep the wolf from the door," Vogelsang began, the slow colour mounting to his cheek.

"Yes, yes. I know. I do not offer to support you and them. I only propose to make you a loan. I assure you that your daughter will make enough to pay me back four-fold, if her voice is once heard."

"You think so?"

"I know so. Her voice is not a merely fine voice. It is a wonder. It will thrill all Europe."

Vogelsang considered. But the grave-eyed young man facing him impelled conviction.

"However, I do not ask you to give me your final answer now. Wait until I write to you from the city."

Then the count recrossed the room and shook hands with Christine.

"I think we will meet again before the month is out," he said.

And they did. He saw the director, and the director was so much impressed by what he heard from Von Walden, and, at Von Walden's request, from other members of the court who had listened to Christine, that he agreed to give her employment for the winter, should her voice equal his expectations.

She came, and, as Count Von Walden had prophesied, the director engaged her immediately.

She put herself under instruction, and of course with due training went through with the difficult parts assigned to her from the very first.

She appeared in the spring in the leading rôle of a new opera, and from that hour the world was at her feet.

Her fame spread over Europe; other directors came to hear her and to pass judgment upon her.

The verdict was unanimous. It was the voice of that generation.

Moreover, her dazzling beauty secured her triumphs of other kinds.

She was overwhelmed with costly presents, invitations of all kinds, recognition from the highest quarters.

The king took an especial interest in the girl whose genius, so to speak, he had evoked. Christine was the fashion.

All the idle young men about town, the curled darlings, the silken fops, hung about her steps.

They professed to be her lovers. So did one or two elderly men who had survived numerous other love-affairs ere this.

But Christine treated them with laughing scorn.

Much she cared for them and their love—as they called it.

They acted the part tolerably well, too; but the girl was cold.

They did not even succeed in making her believe they were in earnest.

Meanwhile, she saw Count Von Walden quite often; although he by no means haunted her steps.

Sometimes, when she was singing to a vast, spellbound audience, her eyes would suddenly be fixed by his, as he sat in a seat chosen with especial reference to hearing and seeing her. And then she would sing her best. Gratitude and a warm regard inspired her. Did she not owe all this to him?

Always, she felt that he was with her, even

when she did not see him; that he followed her movements; knew what she was doing; gave his attention to her plans even before she had acquainted him with them.

"Are you a magician?" she asked him, one day. "I tell you things that I think are news; and, lo and behold, you know all about it. Well, you always were my good angel."

He was seated beside her. He rose abruptly and walked up and down the room.

"No," he said, "not that. The angels fulfil their missions with no hope of reward. I, all this time, have done what I have for you, with a glittering prize before my eyes. I can see now, looking back, that I have always had this hope—from the time I first saw you, and when I tried to make myself believe that I wanted to render a service to art, through you."

Of course she understood him. His voice shook; his eyes were dimmed; he realised how much was at stake; how much happiness or the reverse her answer would confer.

"I love you," he said, standing before her, then stooping and taking her hand. "May I? Can you love me?"

Six months ago it would have seemed a preposterous thing in her thoughts that Count Eric Von Walden should plead humbly for the love of Peasant Voselsang's daughter.

Then she had worn rough clothes and done rough work, and lived in a cabin, and associated with coarse people.

But now she sat at her ease in a luxurious room; she dressed in elegant, fashionable attire; all the appointments of refinement and wealth were about her.

She had long since paid back her debt to Count Von Walden.

She made enough money even to support her family and herself; she was perfectly independent of the world.

And yet she owed all this to the man before her.

If she had learned to walk, it was because he had first assured her this was a possible matter.

Still he had taught her to walk. She could go alone now.

She believed she would be happier to go alone.

Yes, the happiest life on earth—the only earthly happiness she coveted—was the career of an artist.

Love—what was love? A mere name. Other women married for love; but she was not like other women. Besides, a sudden thought struck her.

Count Eric talked to her of love, but he had not said a word about marriage. None of her other lovers ever had.

They merely wanted to amuse themselves; to flirt—yes, that was what it was called, she believed.

"I am sorry," she said, after a pause, brief at that. All these thoughts rushed fairly through her head. "I would rather you had remained the kind friend I trusted in, and am, oh, so grateful to! But as for love between you and me, Count Von Walden, that is out of the question. Keep your love for the woman whom you will make your countess one of these days—the woman in your own rank of life."

"Christine," he answered, "I love you. I wish to marry you!"

Her heart beat wildly.

Any girl in Nordland would have envied her such a lover.

The pride of any girl in Nordland would have been touched by such a brilliant offer. Count Von Walden came of one of the noblest and most ancient houses in the kingdom. His landed estates were larger than those of any other noble.

He had a large property besides; his equipages and his establishment were the handsomest in the capital.

And he asked her to share his splendour; her, the poor peasant girl that had been, with her peasant father and her peasant brothers and sisters.

It was incredible.

And then the intense longing and love in his eyes!

On a sudden impulse she put her hands both in his.

"How good you are! How good you are? But I am not worthy of you. You would be ashamed of me fifty times. I am so ignorant, so rough. My people are all so plain."

"You are ennobled by your genius and your beauty. No royal princess is your superior. And as for your being rough, Christine, I have marvelled fifty times at your wonderful tact and grace. You are thoroughly at home in your present way of life. You seem to have been born to it."

"I have often wondered whether I was not a changeling," Christine said. "So you think I carry off my new honours well? I am so glad. But listen. As I am now, I stand on my own merits. I am an artist, and an artist is not judged, well—as the Countess Von Walden would be judged. But if I were the Countess Von Walden, the other countesses and grand ladies would criticise me—"

"I would like to see anyone dare to criticise you."

He was on his knees in front of her by this time, looking up into her blushing, lovely face.

She was beginning to think that love might be a real thing in spite of her scepticism. And she owed him so much!

After all, she always went back to that. She could not bear to give him pain. To hesitate is to yield. Count Von Walden won her to be his wife.

It was agreed that her father and sisters should remove from their old home to a farm on one of the Von Walden estates, and Vogelsang was given a position corresponding to that of the English bailiff.

Had Christine remained on the stage, her father had determined to go back to his former occupation.

He would never consent to be supported by his daughter.

So that her family were infinitely benefited by her marriage.

The yellow-haired, blue-eyed Vogelsang girls, ranging from eight to eighteen, Linda, Eva, Marie, Anna, Sophie, all adored him.

The marriage made a stir, of course. The romance of the thing tickled the popular fancy. The public appreciated the fact that the count it was who had first brought this jewel to the light.

"Never would have married her, though, if he had not been afraid some of the rest of us would carry her off," sneered the brainless young fops and elderly dandies who had tried to make love to Christine.

Von Walden Castle was more beautiful than Christine, in her inexperience, was aware of. Grand, beautiful, she thought; but stage diamonds and stage splendours would have pleased her as well.

Still, for a while, she was happy. Everything was so new, so untried. She rode, she drove, she danced. She sang for her husband; not often for a larger audience. It was his one weakness, to begrudge her exhibiting her talent in public.

This was the cross of her life. She craved sympathy, appreciation, the excitement of admiration; the latter, to be sure, in a less vulgar sense than that of a merely pretty woman hungering to have her vanity ministered to. Her husband was singularly unselfish and considerate.

He studied her wishes in every respect; he had begun their acquaintance by thinking for her and planning for her, he continued this habit, only in more minute detail.

Sometimes she wondered why her husband, who apparently only lived for her, never guessed that she was dissatisfied; that she longed to be something more than a gorgeous toy.

In so wondering she proved how little she understood him. Not a word or sign of hers escaped him.

He proposed to her to travel, and she agreed eagerly.

She longed for variety; and perhaps something would happen before the time came to return again to the castle.

"When will you come home?" Marie asked, smoothing down her sister's velvet dress.

"I don't know. Never, if I have my own way. I hate the castle."

"Oh, Christine! I think it is the most beautiful place in the world," Eva remonstrated.

"You haven't seen the world. I should hate any place, after I had lived in it a year or so. I used to detest the village we were born in."

"Dear old place!" Eva said. "I love it. And the better I know people and things, the better I love them, if I like them at all."

"That is what Eric says. He talks about old associations by the hour. I don't agree with him. I am not at all sentimental."

"Is Count Eric sentimental?" persisted Eva. "I didn't know men were sentimental."

"Oh, yes, they are, or at least he is. Romantic and sentimental. He would never have married me if he had not been."

"He is the best man in all the world. I don't believe there is another man like him."

"In all the world! Eva, I reminded you before that you had not seen the world, or even a small part of it."

"I don't believe any man could be better than he is."

"I am sure Christine agrees with you," said their father, coming in.

"He is certainly very good to me," Christine assented, with a sigh.

Then she added:

"What a great girl you have grown to be, Eva. How old are you?"

"Fourteen," Eva said, fixing her serious eyes on her sister.

"She is the image of what you were at the same age, Christine," her father said.

"I expect she is."

And the Countess Von Walden, contemplating her sister's singular beauty, wondered whether it, too, would be set in a costly shrine, as hers had been; or whether, like the other beautiful women of their peasant race, she would live and die in obscurity.

"This is not good-bye," the countess said, rising. "We are not going for a week yet. Of course you will all come over to see me before I leave. And, father, Eric will ride over to-morrow to give you his directions."

"I thought a little of coming over to the castle to see the count this evening," said stalwart Peasant Vogelsang.

"There is to be a dinner-party this evening. Come early, if you come at all. Well—until we meet again."

Christine raised her ringed white hand, got into her carriage, and was whirled away.

"And yet she does not look happy," her father murmured. "She has the same discontented expression that she used to have when she lived at home. How strange it is! One would suppose that she had everything that heart could desire now. But it is in the soul. Eva, now, is as cheerful and as bright as a bird."

The Count and Countess Von Walden started upon their travels. The pleasures and the sensuous gratifications of all the kingdoms of the world were theirs to enjoy. All the glories of art and nature ministered to them.

Her husband liked pictures; she followed him through long galleries, and tried to get up an interest in different schools and masters, but it was hard work.

That bored her, too. Finally, she begged him to take her to the opera, the one amusement he had no heart for.

He consented; and, after that, for night after night, she hung, rapt and glowing, upon first one great singer and then another.

At last, one day the crisis came. She came to him, as he sat in his library—they occupied a superb hotel in Paris at the time—writing letters home, giving instructions to have certain changes made about the castle which he thought would add to her comfort. She seated herself beside him, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Eric," she said, "I want to speak to you."

He laid down his pen, a great presentiment of evil upon him. She spoke suddenly and quickly.

"Eric," she went on, "I feel that I made a very great mistake in my marriage. It has been a failure as far as happiness is concerned. I am miserable; and, as for you, the unrest and anxiety I cause you must make you equally unhappy."

"No," he interrupted. "I have you with me. That makes my joy. It is a selfish joy, however, if I have failed to satisfy you. I mourn that this should be so. Oh, Christine, I would die to secure your happiness."

"I believe you would. You are an angel; and I am utterly unworthy of you. I wish, oh, I wish that you had never seen me!"

"I can never wish that. Whatever comes, I have known you and loved you; and—I have believed that you have loved me."

"I did love you. That is, I thought I loved you. At any rate, I never loved anyone else, Eric. I never shall. But, oh, I loved my Art. I am starving for that. I shall never have a moment's peace so long as I am cut off from that. I love my Art with all the passion of my nature. Eric, I feel myself a slave, a shackled and fettered slave, as long as I am tied to this meaningless, grand life, all the real part of me dwarfed and stunted."

He put up his hands to his face, as one does in a great strait, to shut out sight, as though one could also shut out thought thereby; but he yielded to her passionate appeal.

He made her way as smooth as might be. He procured a legal separation, and settled a sum of money upon her.

People shrugged their shoulders, and said that they always knew how it would turn out.

Christine immediately formed an operatic engagement; her success was even more brilliant than it had been before.

Perhaps the prestige of her marriage gave her an added importance; at all events, the world was at her feet.

Meanwhile her husband went back to Von Walden Castle, and endeavoured to soothe his own grief by fulfilling his duty to his tenants, and leading a life of active usefulness. He also devoted his time to study; he applied himself to scientific subjects.

He struggled with his loneliness and his misery.

He did not allow it to embitter him. He had no hard feeling for his wife.

He did not banish her from his heart; he read all the notices of her singing with profound interest.

She was still his wife, united to him by bonds which in his faith were sacramental.

And so he lived, till one day a telegram came with the news of her death!

Of the death of this woman who had been the very incarnation of life; I mean in her strong desire to do.

It came, almost as a first gasping regret to the man who had loved her so devotedly, that she had not been permitted to complete her dream of Art; that she had not had her surfeit of fame.

Yes; her soul had been full of these earthly aspirations.

Her husband feared, with a great shuddering fear, that there had been no place for any others in her heart.

She had died suddenly of a violent cold, resulting in inflammation of the lungs. The newspapers afterwards gave details of her dying—of the solicitous attentions which were paid the great singer by princes and grandees. She had been buried in state, and with all the pomp of a manufactured love.

Count Von Walden hurried on to Milan, where she had died, to ascertain the last particulars and to make arrangements for the removal of her body to the Von Walden cemetery in Nordland.

Then his own health gave way.

He was attacked by a long, lingering fever, on his recovery from which his physician ordered

him complete change of scene and a sea-voyage. He complied.

During his absence he left Conrad Vogelsang in charge of his estate.

He had learned to trust Christine's father more and more.

The other members of the family, however, he had not seen since his separation from Christine.

He had never overcome a painful reluctance to see them; they had so vividly recalled the great bliss and the great sorrow of his life.

Thus it was that on his return from England he had not been thrown with any of the five sisters for as many years.

He found Castle Von Walden unchanged, unless it were more beautiful than ever.

The day after his arrival at home he strolled out for a walk in the park, turning presently down a wood path, which had always been a favourite walk of his.

Recollections of his happy early married life crowded thick upon him. How well he remembered bringing Christine to this place to show her the sweet wood-violets that grew in such profusion here.

And thus thinking of Christine, he was scarcely surprised suddenly to see her apparition moving slowly through the trees, stopping every now and then to pick a flower, singing softly as she went; Christine—simple, beautiful, dressed as when he had first known her and loved her.

He did not stop to reason or consider. A few quick steps brought him to her side. She turned towards him with a little cry, half surprise, half recognition. How beautiful she was, but with an unwonted charm of tenderness and sympathy in her eyes!

"Christine," he said.

"I do not wonder you call me by that name," the girl replied. "They all tell me I am so like her. But—I am Eva."

The rest is soon told. Count Von Walden found his old love again in Eva, only infinitely nearer his ideal. She atoned to him for his sufferings in the past. She loved him as he deserved to be loved.

M. L.

FACETIE.

THE SAVINGS BANK.

"If I place my money in the savings bank," inquired one of the newly-arrived, "when can I draw it out again?"

"Oh," responded his Hibernian friend, "sure an' if you put it in to-day, you can get it out to-morrow, by giving thirty days' notice."

VENUS AND ADONIS.

"MEN who suffer their wives' photographs to be exhibited for sale in the shop-windows run the risk of being thought to get some profit by so doing, for they otherwise would hardly sanction such publicity."

WHERE are you going to, my pretty maid?

I'm going to be photographed, sir, she said.

May I go with you, my pretty maid?

Yes, if you like it, she calmly said.

What is your fortune, my pretty maid?

My face is my fortune, sir, she said.

How do you live on't, my pretty maid?

By selling my photos, she promptly said.

Then may I marry you, my pretty maid?

If you've a title, perhaps—she said.

—Punch.

"AFTER THIS, THE DELUGE!"

A TERRIBLE tale comes to "Judy's" ears from Richmond.

The other day the immemorial ceremony of "beating the bounds" was carried out there

with even more than the customary success; for, not content with the usual plan of selecting as the victim for the "ceremony" of "bumping" upon the boundary-stone or post some small boy who couldn't help himself if he wanted to, a bold local dairyman had actually the astounding irreverence to suggest to the parochial authorities that a policeman, who happened to be there handy, should be "bumped."

And the policeman was "bumped" accordingly!

The Richmond magistrates, however, took a different view to that of the bold dairyman. "In beating the bounds," they said, in effect, "a line must naturally be drawn somewhere; we, however, draw it at a policeman; to 'bump' one of our own officers is passing 'the bounds.'"

—Punch.

THE RESULTS OF DIPLOMACY.

"HER Imperial Highness the Crown Princess has conferred a mark of distinction upon Lord Beaconsfield, by a present of flowers and strawberries from the new Palace Nurseries at Potsdam."—Times.

Lucky Lord Beaconsfield! Her Majesty's eldest daughter gives him strawberries. Of course this is supposed to portend that Her Majesty will add the leaves.

—Punch.

WHAT THEY SAY.

LORD ROSEBERRY gave Miss Rothschild, his betrothed, the largest sapphire in the world known to exist.

They say it's almost as big as a small house, and that his lordship loves his Hannah like a house-sapphire.

—Funny Folks.

PROFOUND TRUTH.

No matter how thoughtfully you may have your house cleaned before leaving it the wife of the next man who moves in will declare it is not fit for a pig to live in, and will spend a week in making it fit.

FRENCH Dame to the Family Physician:—"Doctor, I want my husband to take me to Nice for the winter. Now, what is the matter with me?"

THEATRICAL MEM.

If the world-renowned Mr. Irving were seen, gun in hand, in the stable, what phenomenon would he remind us of?—A shooting star.

—Judy.

DRAMATIC CON.

WHY is a woman, whose husband has been called out with the Reserves, like the Royal Afternoon Theatre?—Because she has the Family "On-er, to be sure!"

—Funny Folks.

CLEARING THE WAY.

CABBIES call a Hansom a "Shovel." It must not, therefore, be thought to imply any want of respect to the Russian diplomatist when a policeman is heard shouting to somebody, "Why don't you drive that Shovel off?"

—Funny Folks.

TIME ENOUGH.

ASTRONOMERS have discovered that the moon is drawing nearer to the earth by about an inch a year.

But it is hardly worth while taking to low-crowned hats on that account—or neglecting to have one's boots heeled just yet.

It is pleasant to think that we shall be able, a few millions of years hence, to reach out a hand, and pat the face of Miss Luna, as she goes by, before she actually takes up her abode amongst us.

They are useful people, astronomers!

—Judy.

A TRUE NOTE.

"THE blowing of the Beluga," says Mr. Henry Lee, in his interesting pamphlet on the White Whale, "is said not to be unmusical at sea." We haven't much chance of hearing the "Blowing of the Beluga at sea," but we are pretty sure to hear the puffing of the Beluga on land.

—Punch.

What is the best time for country people to procure an abundance of cheap ammunition?

Just after a heavy rain. Why? Because the roads are then full of cart-ridges.

ONE VIEW OF THE CASE.

MASTER: "You say Alfred the Great was a very excellent king, and did much good for his subjects; now give me an instance of his good deeds."

SMALL BOY (just recovered from a bilious attack and the paternal wrath): "Please, sir, he burnt some nasty, unwholesome cakes, that would have made the shepherd ill." —Fun.

PROPHETIC LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

A REPORT of a Flower Show informs us that "Messrs. Veitch showed a new Begonia, high and stately in growth, with a leaf tending towards the strawberry."

"The plant is called, 'The Earl of Beaconsfield.'"

Messrs. Veitch, perhaps, contemplate the probability of having to raise their plant a step in the peacage.

They will prove themselves prophets, as well as florists, should the sequel of the Congress confirm the indication of the leaf of their Begonia "tending towards the strawberry." Then they will also, of course, have foretold a pacific solution of the Eastern Question.

—Punch.

A SETTLER.

JONES went to see Brown in his new house. "Yes," said Jones, after a critical inspection of the handsomely furnished dining-room. "Most complete, I must say, everything here but a dumb waiter; why don't you have one—eh?"

"Why," said Brown, "fact is, you know, I don't find them answer."

Jones asked no more questions. —Judy.

TRUST.

"Will you always trust me, dearest?" he asked, looking down into her great blue eyes with unspeakable affection.

She was a saleswoman at a shirt warehouse, and she told him business was business, and he'd have to pay cash every time.

HIS STAYING POWERS.

A YOUNG lady was praising her beau one Monday morning for his strength of character. "Yes," said her father, grimly, "I've noticed that he has great staying powers."

A POSER.

If you give your word to anyone, how can you possibly keep it? —Judy.

JUDGING FROM APPEARANCES.

Nor long since, while Rev. Mr. Mo——, a Presbyterian minister, was in the neighbourhood of Bull's Gap, visiting his friends, he was overtaken one day by an old gentleman who seemed to be quite inquisitive.

After riding along some time together, the stranger remarked:

"My friend, I believe I can guess your occupation."

"Perhaps so," responded Rev. Mac.

"From appearances, I think you're a preacher, —a Presbyterian preacher."

"You are right," said the Rev.; "but how do you tell?"

"Sir, by the tie of your neckcloth, and the cut of your coat, together with the fine horse you ride; anybody could tell that."

After a while the stranger rode a little in advance of the Rev., when the latter, not to be outdone by his companion, exclaimed:

"Sir, I believe I can guess what you follow for a living."

"I guess you can't," said the stranger, reining up.

"Yes, sir, I can; you are a preacher, too; a Hard-shell Baptist preacher."

"Really, you surprise me. It is true—but how do you tell?"

"Why, sir, from appearances, and from the sign you carry in your pocket," pointing to a quart bottle, with a corn-cob stopper, which was sticking about half way out of his overcoat pocket.

The stranger had business in another direction, which he left to attend to immediately.

SIR WILFRED LAWSON TO NOTE.

Why should not the House of Commons rob the poor man of his beer?—Because it is itself always passing measures, and is often enough at the bar.

—Judy.

STATISTICS.

LIFETIMES.—A man has lived 970 years; whale (estimated), 900; elephant, 400; swan, 380; tortoise, 107; eagle, 104; camel, 100; raven, 100; lion, 70; horse, 62; pig, 30; dolphin, 30; porpoise, 30; bear, 20; dog, 20; wolf, 20; rhinoceros, 20; cat, 20; fox, 16; cow, 15; sheep, 10; squirrel, 2; rabbit, 8; good resolutions, an hour.

LITTLE MARGARET.

SWEET little Margaret, scantily dressed,
Patiently toiling and doing her best,
All her soft hair, bright as silk of the corn,
Close to her head, like a poor laddie's shorn.

Could she look back at the cold wintry day,
When at the door of the workhouse she lay,
Mem'ry would render her poor little soul
Sadder than ever as weary days roll.

Sixteen long summers have passed o'er her head,
Since she slept low in that cold, dreary bed;
Five toilsome years have her busy hands scored,
Since she was "bound out for bed and for board."

Poor are her garments, and shoes she has none;
This brings the blushes—for Maggie has grown
Tall, like the shade-flower; and certain unrest
Tells of the maidenly thoughts in her breast.

Other girls learn at the school and the kirk,
She must know nothing, do nothing but work;
Other girls boast of their ribbons and lace,
Maggie has nothing but beauty and grace.

Now, pretty Maggie, a secret I'll tell;
Young farmer Grey, that you meet at the well,
Watches you covertly, pitying your life,
Fain, by-and-bye, he would make you his wife.

Ah! you "won't favour him, when all is done;"
Girls' hearts are riddles as sure as the sun;
Better, perhaps, then, to toil as you do,
Unthanked, than wed without love, and then rue.

M. A. K.

GEMS.

WITHOUT the virtue of humanity, one can neither be honest in poverty nor contented in abundance.

ONE of the very hardest things for a man to

do is to own that he has been in the wrong. But when he has done so, he has reached the supremecy of his life. Then there is hope for him.

THE best thing to give to your enemy is forgiveness; to your opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity.

THERE is nothing in this world so sensitive as affection. It feels its own happiness too much not to tremble for its reality; and starts, ever and anon, from its own delicious consciousness, to ask, "Is it not, indeed a dream?" A word and a look are enough either to repress or encourage.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

QUEEN'S CAKE.—One pound of sugar, three-quarters pound of butter, one pound of flour, six eggs, one wine-glass of wine, one of brandy, mix it together with milk; then add one-half pound of currants, one-half pound of raisins, one quarter pound of citron, one teaspoon of cinnamon, one-half teaspoon of mace. Bake for two hours.

SPANISH BUNS.—Three-quarters pound of flour sifted, one quarter pound of butter, cut up fine in the flour, three eggs beaten light, one wine glass of yeast, a little rosewater, wine, and brandy, one-half pint of milk, one quarter pound of sugar, a little cinnamon and nutmeg; set it to rise; then bake, and sift sugar over them.

WAVERLY JUMBLES.—One pound of flour, one-half pound of butter, three-quarters pound of brown sugar, two eggs, one-half of a nutmeg, two tablespoons of rosewater, or any kind of seasoning. Cream together the butter and sugar; add the beaten eggs, and then the flour; roll them out thin, and cut with a shape.

RICE CAKES.—Melt one quarter pound of butter in three pints of milk, stir in two tablespoons of wheat flour, and as much rice flour as will make a stiff batter; add two eggs, well beaten, one tea-cup of yeast, one teaspoon of salt. Bake on the griddle.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE valuable collection of old Italian porcelain belonging to M. Alexandre Castellani has just been sold at the Hotel Drouot, Paris. A round dish, decorated with blue flowers on a light ground, was knocked down at 1,100fr., and a larger one, which formerly was part of the famous Medici porcelain, brought 10,000fr. The sale produced more than 406,000fr.

THE heirlooms at Leigh Court, the residence of the late Sir William Miles, Bart., are estimated to be worth upwards of £150,000, and comprise a noble gallery of paintings, chiefly old masters, and a splendid service of gold plate.

THE Prince of Wales has ordered one of the Japanese rooms that are being imported into this country. Every piece of the structures takes out and can be fitted together in a few hours, without nail, glue, or peg. The price with all sorts of art decorations and fittings, is £280. It is said they are specimens of the unblemished work of a people with whom a good taste is traditional.

THE Hon. Mr. Gray, eldest son of Lord Gray, accompanied by sixteen young men of the aristocracy, recently started in one of the large Cunard steamers hired for the purpose, to make the tour of the coast of Iceland. This singular pleasure trip will not be completed until November.

THE French have grown so clever at imitating pearls that a jeweller in the Paris Exhibition shows a necklace which purports to be a mixture of true pearls and false, and challenges his customers to single out the real ones. Nobody has yet succeeded.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MARTHA.—To wash flannels made suds of soft water as hot as you can bear your hands in. Rinse in same way and dry quickly. Use old soft soap, as the chemicals in hard soap full the flannels. This applies to all woollen goods.

JUVENILE.—To make modelling clay knead dry clay with glycerine instead of water, and a mass is obtained which continues moist and plastic for a length of time. This removes one of the greatest inconveniences that is experienced by the modeller.

INQUIRER.—In printing pictures from prints the page is first soaked in a solution of potash and then in one of tartaric acid. This produces a perfect diffusion of crystals of bitartrate of potash through the texture of the imprinted part of the paper. As this salt resists oil the ink roller may now be passed over the surface, without transferring any ink to the printed part.

M. G.—With care we think you might improve your handwriting very much—there is an appearance of undue haste about it. The style is not ladylike. Use capital letters less frequently.

STONE.—To prevent potatoes from rot dust over the floor of the bin with lime and put in about six or seven inches of potatoes, then dust with lime as before, then put more potatoes, using about one bushel of lime to forty bushels of potatoes; the lime improves the flavour of the potatoes and effectually kills the fungi which causes the rot.

EDWIN.—To preserve apples pack them in boxes or barrels elevated from the cellar floor, with a layer of dry sawdust at the bottom of each box or barrel; then put a layer of apples, placed out of contact with each other, then a layer of sawdust, and so on till all are full. Sound apples packed in this manner will keep fresh for a long time.

ANDREW N.—Artificial lemonade can be made with loaf sugar two pounds, tartaric acid half an ounce, essence of lemon thirty drops, essence of almond twenty drops. Dissolve the tartaric acid in two pints of hot water, add the sugar, and lastly the lemon and almond; stir well, cover with a cloth, and leave until cold; put two table-spoonsful into a tumbler, and fill up with cold water. This drink, it is said, will be found much more refreshing and palatable than either ginger beer or lemonade; the addition of a very little bicarbonate of potash to each tumblerful before drinking will give a wholesome effervescing drink.

BRAMAN.—Carbolic acid seems to be the most popular disinfectant now in use, and it is a valuable assistant in ridding a place of disease which has already gained a foothold, as well as in warding off the approach of the destroyer. The manner of using it is to form a solution of about two ounces of the acid to three quarts of water, and apply with a watering-pot, after the house has been cleaned out. Once a week is often enough to use it in ordinary circumstances, but in cases of disease, or where houses are greatly infested with vermin, it should be used oftener. For ridding the bodies of fowls of vermin use one part of acid to eighty parts of water, to which some add a little glycerine; apply with a brush to the roots of the feathers on different parts of the body. A better plan, however, is to always keep a supply of wood ashes within their reach for them to dust in, when they will keep themselves free from vermin, as a general thing.

SUBSCRIBER.—An Italian professor has recently made some very agreeable medical researches, resulting in the discovery that vegetable perfumes exercise a positively healthful influence on the atmosphere, converting its oxygen into ozone and thus increasing its oxydising influence. The essences found to develop the largest quantity of ozone are those of cherry, laurel, clover, lavender, mint, juniper, lemon, fennel, and bergamot; those that give it in smaller quantity are anise, nutmeg, and thyme. The flowers of the narcissus, hyacinth, mignonette, heliotrope, and lily of the valley, develop ozone in closed vessels. Flowers destitute of perfume do not develop it, and those which have but slight perfume develop it only in small quantities. Reasoning from these facts, the professor recommends the cultivation of flowers in marshy districts, and in all places infested with animal emanations, on account of the powerful oxydising influence of ozone. The inhabitants of such regions should, he says, surround their houses with beds of the most odorous flowers.

ELLEN and KATE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Ellen is seventeen. Kate is seventeen.

SEROY would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

MAGGIE and ETHEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Maggie is nineteen, fair. Ethel is twenty, dark. Respondents must be twenty-five, good-looking.

AMELIA, ANNIE, CARRIE, HARRIET, and CONSTANCE, five friends, would like to correspond with five young men with a view to matrimony. Amelia is twenty-three, tall, good-tempered, dark hair, grey eyes, handsome. Annie is twenty-four, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, medium height. Carrie is twenty-two, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, dark. Harriet is eighteen, fond of home and children, good-looking, dark hair and eyes, domesticated. Constance is twenty, good-looking, brown hair and eyes, fair, fond of children. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-five, fond of home, of loving dispositions, medium height, brown eyes, and fair.

JANETTE P., twenty, fair, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman.

SERAPANTA D., nineteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a fair young man with a view to matrimony.

OXONA would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

S. D. and C. W., two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. S. D. is seventeen, medium height, of a loving disposition, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. C. W. is eighteen, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children, medium height, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-one, fond of home.

C. D. G., twenty, fair, medium height, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four, fond of home.

HARRY, twenty-five, tall, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age, loving, and tall.

C. S., eighteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

LIFE.

THEY tell me that life
Is a toilsome strife,
A wearisome journey uphill;
But I find not these words
In the songs of the birds,
Or the murmurings of the rill.

They call life an ocean
In angry commotion,
And they say that our bark is frail;
But the storms, as they heighten,
Tend only to brighten
Our ever complaining tale.

We move in a battle
'Midst the cannon's rattle,
They call it the "battle of life";
Do we struggle in vain
Amid the leaden rain?
Need we sink at the height of the strife?

Oh, hill we must climb!
Oh, frail barque sublime!
Oh, battle with dangers so fraught!
When love has the helm,
Life's a glorious realm
Where trials sink into naught. T. M. E.

B. E. and D. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. B. E. is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home. D. L. is twenty-four, medium height, dark brown hair, dark eyes, and very fond of music.

TED and NED, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Ted is twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes. Ned is twenty-four, medium height, hazel eyes, dark. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-three, and domesticated.

JAMES W., a sailor in the Royal Navy, twenty-two, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen.

V. E. and T. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. V. E. is twenty-seven, dark hair, dark grey eyes, medium height. T. L. is eighteen, fair, medium height, light hair, light grey eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

LORETTA, twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, of medium height, fond of music and dancing, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young man fond of home and loving.

POLLY and ALICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Polly is eighteen, tall, light brown hair, blue eyes. Alice is sixteen, tall, light brown hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be about nineteen, fond of home, loving.

M. E. D., thirty-one, a widow, would like to correspond with a lady about his own age with a view to matrimony.

BOB E., eighteen, good-tempered, would like to correspond with a fair young lady about seventeen, fond of home.

D. E. T. and F. E., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. D. E. T. is fair, handsome, tall. F. E. is good-looking, fair. Must be about twenty, medium height.

C. E. and E. D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. C. E. is eighteen, fond of music. E. D. is seventeen, dark hair, brown eyes, and loving. Respondents must be about twenty, dark, and tall.

G. C. and B. K., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. G. C. is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. B. K. is eighteen, medium height, dark hair, dark brown eyes, loving, fond of home and children.

D. J. B., twenty-four, dark hair, hazel eyes, fair, and medium height, wishes to correspond with a gentleman. Must be fair, good-looking.

D. B. S., nineteen, of a loving disposition, tall, dark hair, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, fond of home and children, brown hair, dark eyes.

E. N., tall, good-looking, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a tall young gentleman fond of home.

R. E., twenty-two, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, dark, and loving.

LILL and MARY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Lily is eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home, fair. Mary is twenty, auburn hair, light blue eyes, good-tempered. Must be about twenty-one, tall.

T. C. and F. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies between eighteen and twenty. T. C. is twenty-three, light hair, blue eyes, fair. F. B. is nineteen, dark.

G. P. F., a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. He is dark, medium height, good-looking. Respondent must be about twenty-two.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FLY BLOCK is responded to by—J. M., twenty, medium height, dark eyes, fair.

TABE WILLIE by—E. G., dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, domesticated.

D. H. by—A. H., twenty, fond of home and children, fair.

A. P. by—J. H., twenty-two, dark brown eyes, fond of home and children.

J. K. by—M. S., twenty-four, dark, tall.

L. B. B. by—Rose, a widow, thirty-six, tall, of a loving disposition.

CLARA H. by—William H.
L. J. by—Julius Caesar, nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height.

L. P. by—Jennie, twenty-three, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home.

A. B. by—Janet, twenty-one, brown hair, blue eyes, tall.

HARRY by—Clarice, nineteen, dark eyes, good-looking, fond of music.

WILLIAM by—S. L., seventeen, black hair, dark eyes, fond of home.

R. C. by—Horace, twenty-three.

ETHEL by—Henry P., twenty-two, short, brown hair, blue eyes.

EDWARD by—Jessie.

FRIZ by—Alfred, twenty-six, light hair, hazel eyes, good-looking.

M. T. by—S. B., eighteen, fond of home and music, tall.

RICHARD by—Blue Jacket, twenty-one, light hair, fond of music.

MARY by—Jack, twenty-eight, dark hair, grey eyes, and tall.

GEORGE by—R. P.

TOM by—Dora, nineteen, golden hair, blue eyes, fond of music.

J. K. by—Jessie, twenty-one, fond of dancing, blue eyes, dark.

HILDA by—James, twenty-eight, hazel eyes, fond of music and dancing.

L. W. by—B. G., nineteen, black hair and eyes, fond of home and children.

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